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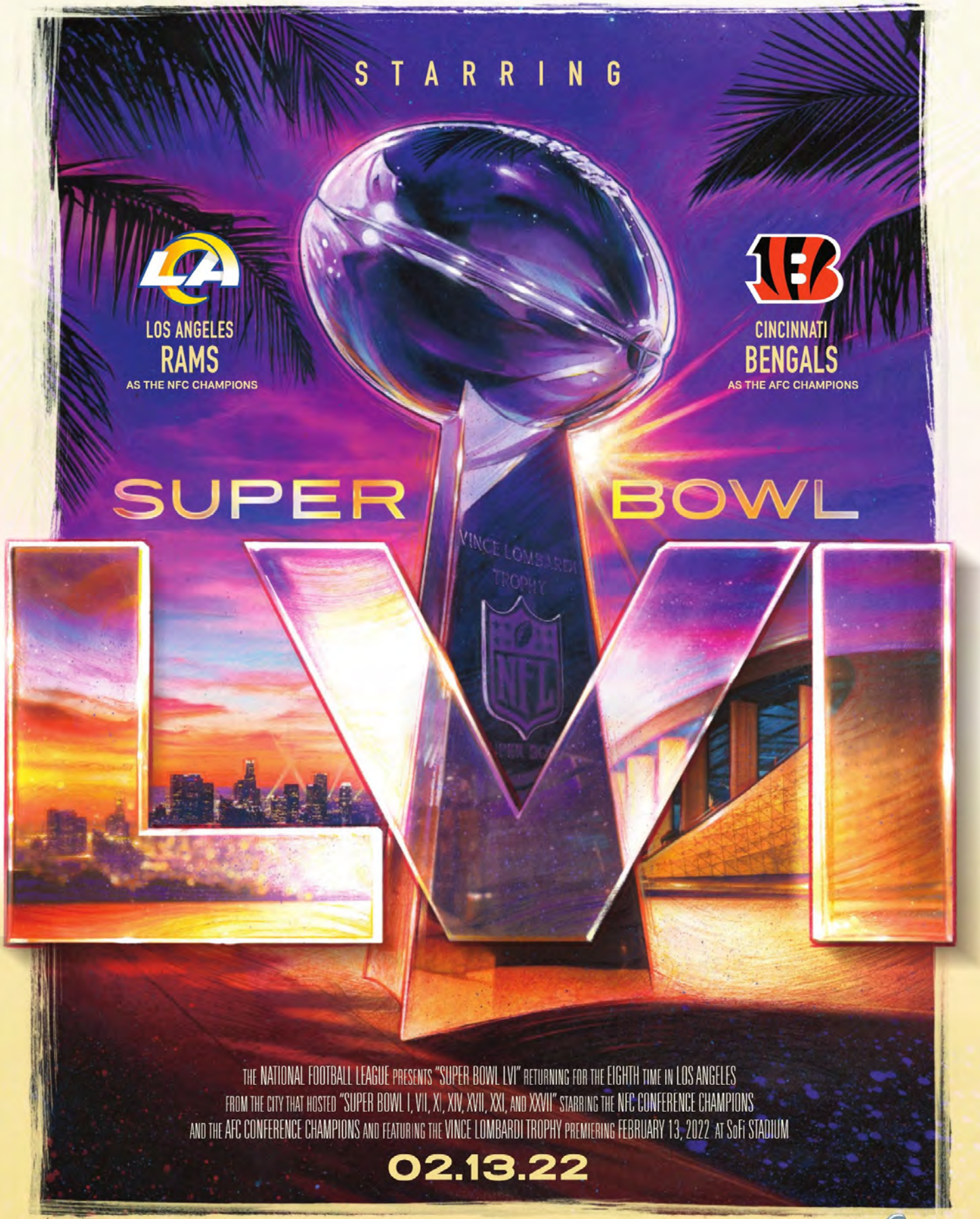
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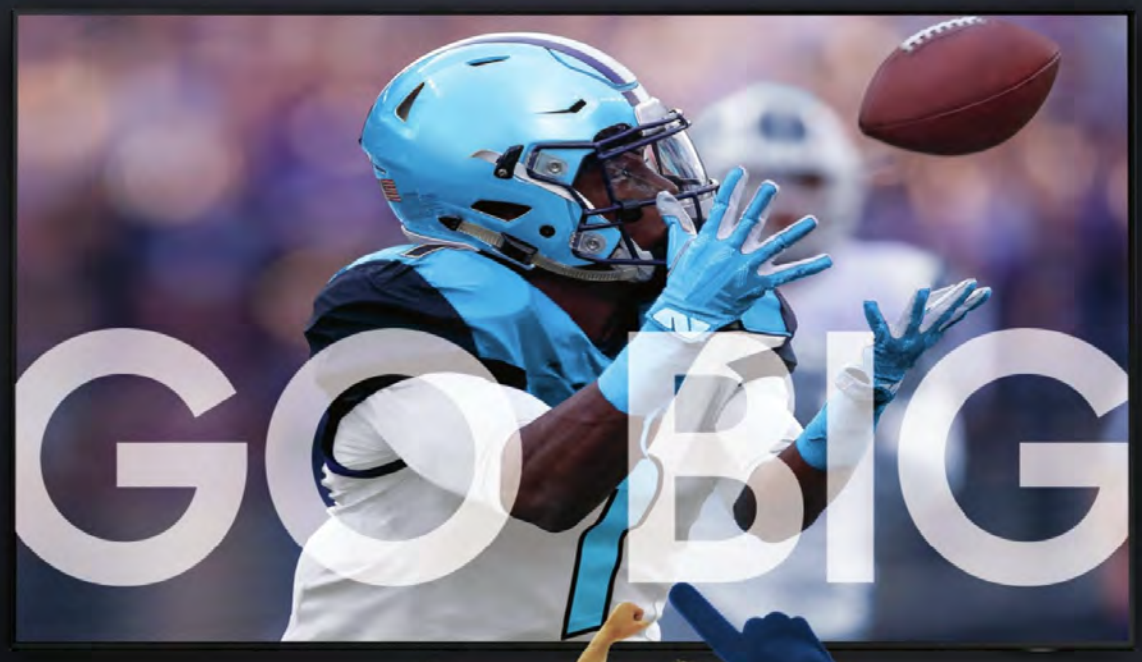

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Connecting with communities and causes is among the NFL's most important missions.

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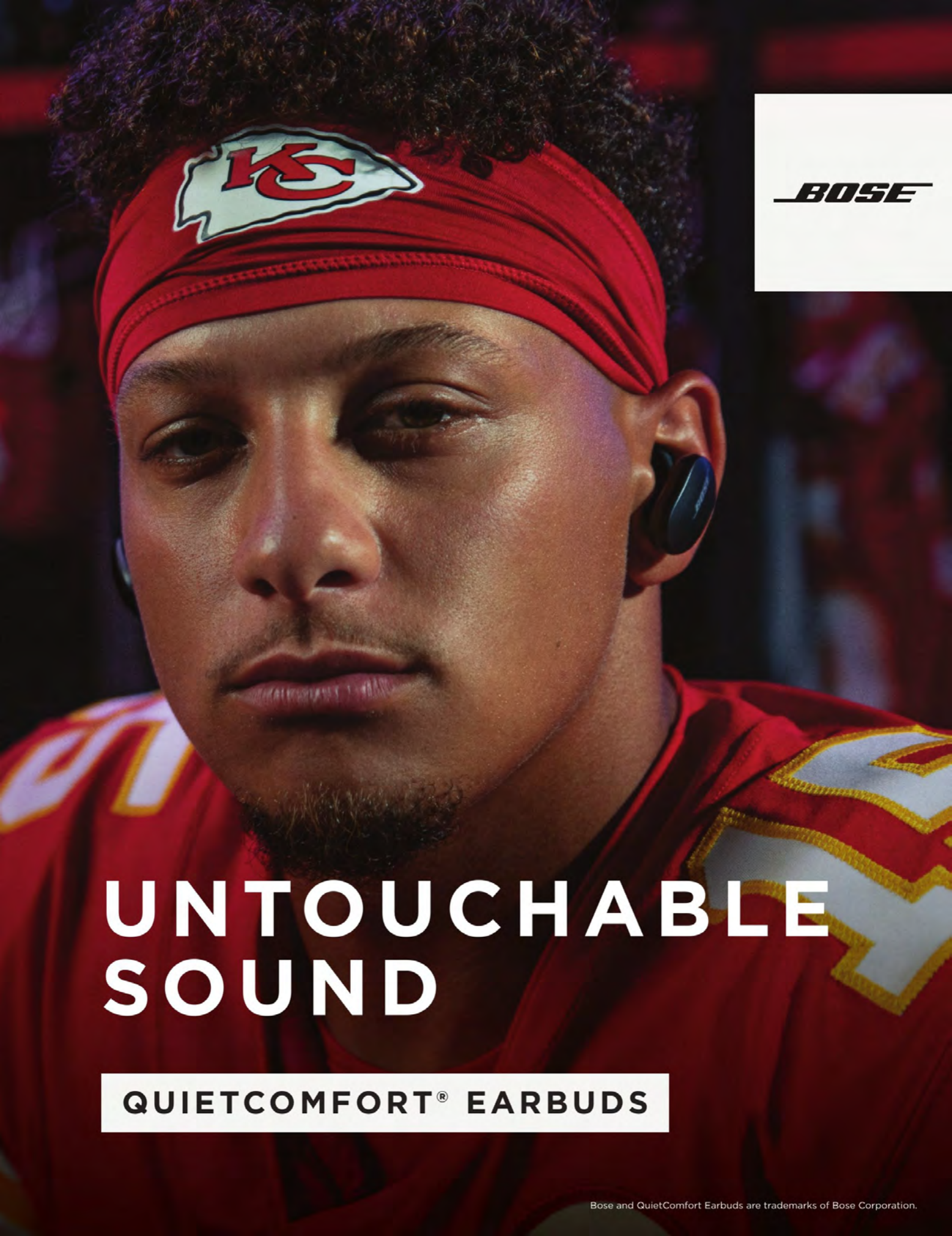

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SoFi Stadium Seating Chart

Super Bowl Code of Conduct

THE NFL IS COMMITTED TO CREATING A SAFE, COMFORTABLE, AND ENJOYABLE EXPERIENCE FOR ALL FANS. AS SUCH, FANS ARE REQUIRED TO REFRAIN FROM THE FOLLOWING:

- Behavior that is unruly, disruptive, or illegal in nature
- Intoxication or other signs of drug or alcohol impairment that result in irresponsible behavior
- Offensive language or obscene gestures, including the use of such language or gestures concerning a person's race, ethnicity, color, gender, religion, creed, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, or national origin; or to instigate, incite, or encourage a confrontation or physical assault
- Interference with the progress of the game (including throwing objects on the field and any unauthorized entry to the field of play)
- The use of drugs (including marijuana), other illegal substances, and/or smoking (including vaporizers, e-cigarettes, and smokeless tobacco)
- Failing to follow instruction of Super Bowl personnel
- Conduct that results in damage to the stadium or other personal property
- Violations of any stadium policies, local City of Inglewood ordinances, state, federal, or other applicable laws or regulations

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THE BENGALS AND THE RAMS TAKE THE RED CARPET FOR SUPER BOWL LVI IN LOS ANGELES.

JOE BURROW
CINCINNATI BENGALS

MATTHEW STAFFORD
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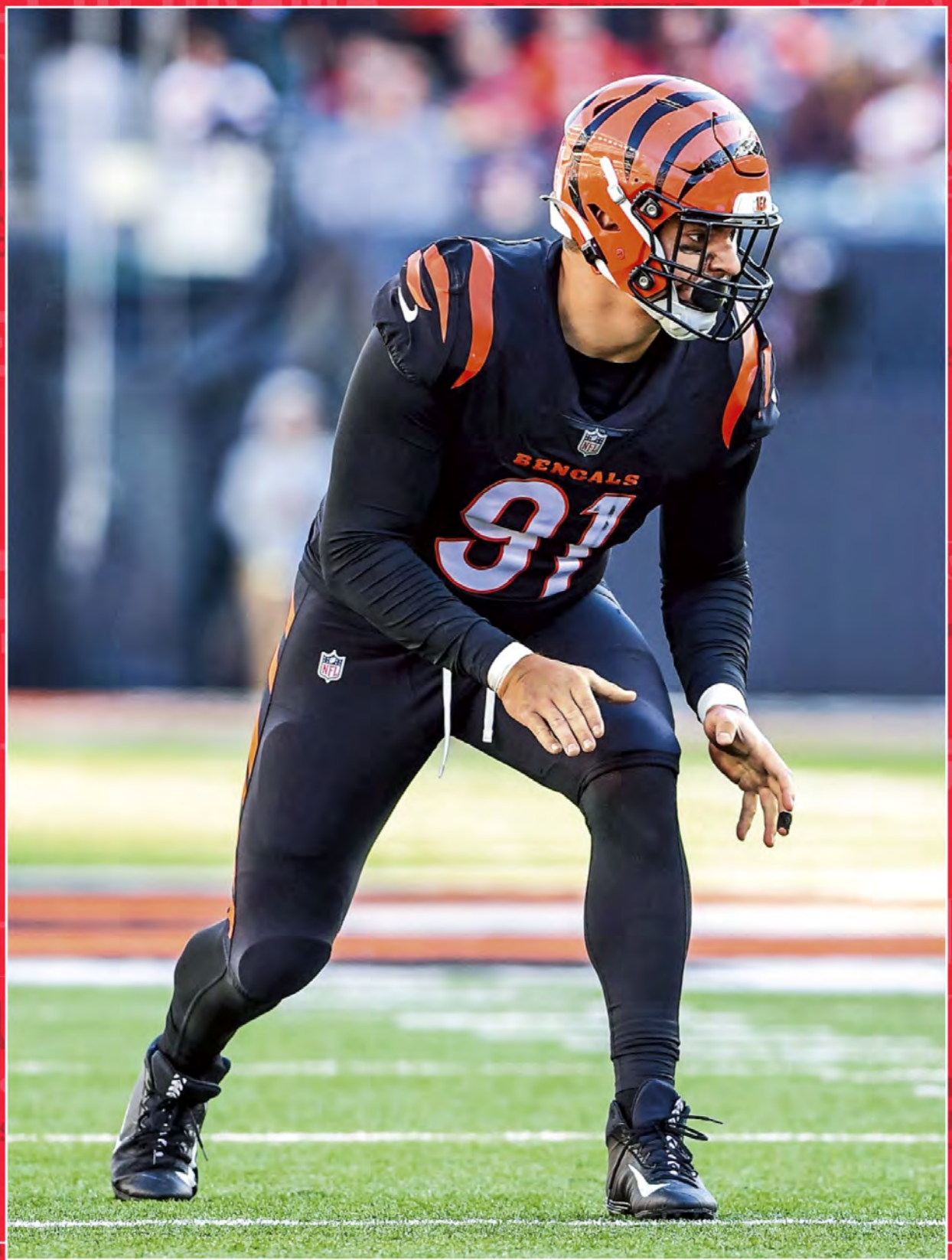

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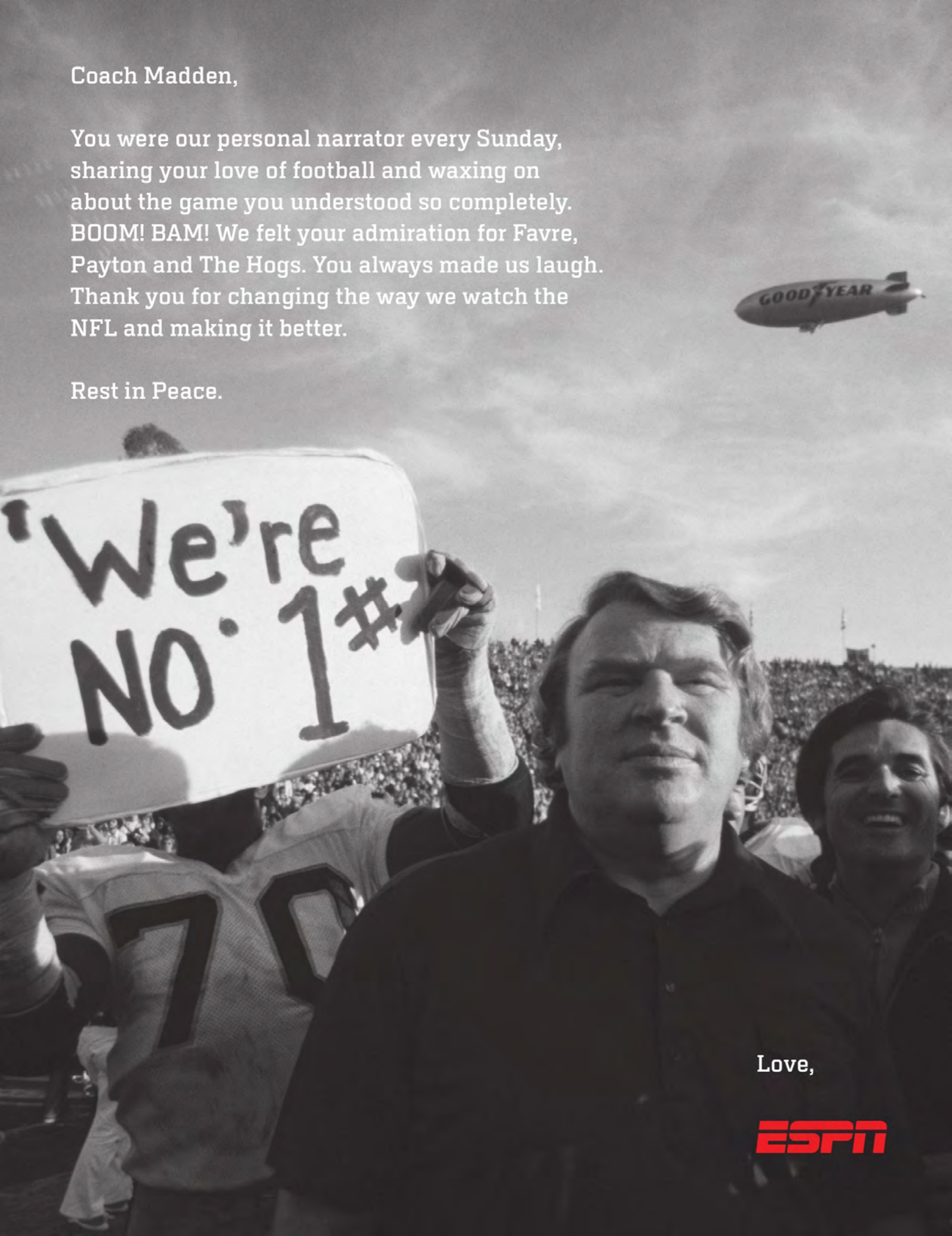
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What is ORGOVYX?

ORGOVYX is a prescription medicine used in adults for the treatment of advanced prostate cancer.

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IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION

What should I tell my healthcare provider before taking ORGOVYX?

Tell your healthcare provider about all of your medical conditions, including if you:

- Have any heart problems, including a condition called long QT syndrome.
- Are pregnant or plan to become pregnant. ORGOVYX can harm your unborn baby and cause loss of pregnancy (miscarriage).
- Have a partner who is pregnant or may become pregnant.
  - Males who have female partners who are able to become pregnant should use effective birth control (contraception) during treatment with ORGOVYX and for 2 weeks after the last dose of ORGOVYX.
- Are breastfeeding or plan to breastfeed. It is not known if ORGOVYX passes into your breast milk.

Tell your healthcare provider about all the medicines or treatments you receive, including: prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements. Taking ORGOVYX with certain other medicines can affect how ORGOVYX works or may cause side effects.

You should not start or stop any medicine before you talk with your healthcare provider who prescribed ORGOVYX.

What are the possible side effects of ORGOVYX?

Serious side effects of ORGOVYX include:

- **Changes in the electrical activity of your heart (QT prolongation).** Your healthcare provider may check your body salts (electrolytes) and the electrical activity of your heart during treatment with ORGOVYX. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you get any signs or symptoms of QT prolongation, including:
  - dizziness
  - fainting
  - feeling that your heart is pounding or racing (palpitations)
  - chest pain

Most common side effects of ORGOVYX include:

- hot flushes
- increased blood sugar levels
- increased blood fat (triglyceride) levels
- muscle and joint pain
- decreased blood hemoglobin levels
- increased liver enzymes
- tiredness
- constipation
- diarrhea

ORGOVYX may cause other side effects including weight gain, decreased sex drive, and erectile function problems.

ORGOVYX may cause fertility problems in males, which may affect your ability to father children. Talk to your healthcare provider if this is a concern for you.

These are not all the possible side effects of ORGOVYX. Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects or if you have a side effect that bothers you or does not go away.

You may report side effects of prescription drugs to the FDA. Visit **www.fda.gov/medwatch** or call 1-800-FDA-1088.

Please see Important Facts Summary for ORGOVYX on the back of this page.

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ORGOVYX™
(relugolix) 120 mg tablets

IMPORTANT FACTS
ORGOVYX (or-GO-vix)
(relugolix)

The information provided here is not comprehensive. To learn more, talk to your healthcare provider or pharmacist about ORGOVYX. To obtain the FDA-approved product labeling, visit www.orgovyx.com or call 1-833-MYOVANT (1-833-696-8268).

What is ORGOVYX?

ORGOVYX is a prescription medicine used in adults for the treatment of advanced prostate cancer.

It is not known if ORGOVYX is safe or effective in females or children.

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- are pregnant or plan to become pregnant. ORGOVYX can harm your unborn baby and cause loss of pregnancy (miscarriage).
- have a partner who is pregnant or may become pregnant.
  - Males who have female partners who are able to become pregnant should use effective birth control (contraception) during treatment with ORGOVYX and for 2 weeks after the last dose of ORGOVYX.
- are breastfeeding or plan to breastfeed. It is not known if ORGOVYX passes into your breast milk.

Tell your healthcare provider about all the medicines you take, including prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements. Taking ORGOVYX with certain other medicines can affect how ORGOVYX works or may cause side effects.

You should not start or stop any medicine before you talk with your healthcare provider who prescribed ORGOVYX.

Know the medicines you take. Keep a list of them with you to show to your healthcare provider and pharmacist when you get a new medicine.

How should I take ORGOVYX?

- Take ORGOVYX exactly as your healthcare provider tells you.
- Take 3 ORGOVYX tablets on your first day of treatment. After that, take 1 ORGOVYX tablet each day.
- Take ORGOVYX at about the same time each day.

How should I take ORGOVYX? (continued)

- Take ORGOVYX with or without food.
- Swallow ORGOVYX tablets whole. Do not crush or chew tablets.
- Your healthcare provider may change your dose if needed.
- **Do not change your dose or stop taking ORGOVYX without talking with your healthcare provider first.**

If you miss a dose of ORGOVYX, take it as soon as you remember. If the dose was missed by more than 12 hours, the missed dose should not be taken. Take your next dose at your regular time the next day.

What are the possible side effects of ORGOVYX?

ORGOVYX may cause serious side effects, including:

- **Changes in the electrical activity of your heart (QT prolongation).** Your healthcare provider may check your body salts (electrolytes) and the electrical activity of your heart during treatment with ORGOVYX. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you get any signs or symptoms of QT prolongation, including:
  - dizziness
  - fainting
  - feeling that your heart is pounding or racing (palpitations)
  - chest pain

The most common side effects of ORGOVYX include:

- hot flushes
- increased blood sugar levels
- increased blood fat (triglyceride) levels
- muscle and joint pain
- decreased blood hemoglobin levels
- increased liver enzymes
- tiredness
- constipation
- diarrhea

Other side effects include weight gain, decreased sex drive, and erectile function problems.

ORGOVYX may cause fertility problems in males, which may affect your ability to father children. Talk to your healthcare provider if this is a concern for you.

These are not all the possible side effects of ORGOVYX.

Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects. You may report side effects to FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088.

These IMPORTANT FACTS are based on ORGOVYX™ (relugolix) Patient Information 214621-MS-000, Issued Dec 2020.

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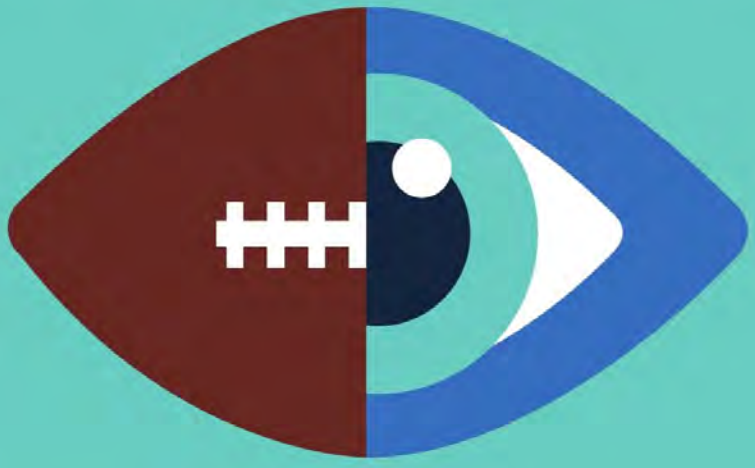

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IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION

Do not use RESTASIS® and *RESTASIS MultiDose*™ Ophthalmic Emulsion if you are allergic to any of the ingredients. Be careful not to touch the container tip to your eye or other surfaces, to help avoid eye injury and contamination. RESTASIS® and *RESTASIS MultiDose*™ should not be used while wearing contact lenses. If contact lenses are worn, they should be removed prior to use of RESTASIS® and *RESTASIS MultiDose*.™ Lenses may be reinserted after 15 minutes.

The most common side effect is a temporary burning sensation. Other side effects include eye redness, discharge, watery eyes, eye pain, foreign body sensation, itching, stinging, and blurred vision.

You are encouraged to report negative side effects of prescription drugs to the FDA. Visit www.fda.gov/medwatch, or call 1-800-FDA-1088.

Please see next page for a Brief Summary of the Full Product Information.

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Be careful not to touch the container tip to your eye or other surfaces to avoid potential for eye injury and contamination.

Use with Contact Lenses
RESTASIS® and **RESTASIS MULTIDOSE™** should not be administered while wearing contact lenses. Patients with decreased tear production typically should not wear contact lenses. If contact lenses are worn, they should be removed prior to the administration of the emulsion. Lenses may be reinserted 15 minutes following administration of **RESTASIS®** and **RESTASIS MULTIDOSE™** ophthalmic emulsion.

ADVERSE REACTIONS
Clinical Trials Experience
Because clinical trials are conducted under widely varying conditions, adverse reaction rates observed in the clinical trials of a drug cannot be directly compared to rates in the clinical trials of another drug and may not reflect the rates observed in practice.

In clinical trials, the most common adverse reaction following the use of cyclosporine ophthalmic emulsion 0.05% was ocular burning (17%).

Other reactions reported in 1% to 5% of patients included conjunctival hyperemia, discharge, epiphora, eye pain, foreign body sensation, pruritus, stinging, and visual disturbance (most often blurring).

Post-marketing Experience
The following adverse reactions have been identified during post approval use of cyclosporine ophthalmic emulsion 0.05%. Because these reactions are reported voluntarily from a population of uncertain size, it is not always possible to reliably estimate their frequency or establish a causal relationship to drug exposure.

Reported reactions have included: hypersensitivity (including eye swelling, urticaria, rare cases of severe angioedema, face swelling, tongue swelling, pharyngeal edema, and dyspnea); and superficial injury of the eye (from the container tip touching the eye during administration).

USE IN SPECIFIC POPULATIONS
Pregnancy
Risk Summary: Clinical administration of cyclosporine ophthalmic emulsion 0.05% is not detected systemically following topical ocular administration *[see Clinical Pharmacology (12.3)]*, and maternal use is not expected to result in fetal exposure to the drug. Oral administration of cyclosporine to pregnant rats or rabbits did not produce teratogenicity at clinically relevant doses *[see Data]*.

Data
Animal Data: At maternally toxic doses (30 mg/kg/day in rats and 100 mg/kg/day in rabbits), cyclosporine oral solution (USP) was teratogenic as indicated by increased pre- and postnatal mortality, reduced fetal weight and skeletal retardations. These doses (normalized to body surface area) are 5,000 and 32,000 times greater, respectively, than the daily recommended human dose of one drop (approximately 28 mcL) of cyclosporine ophthalmic emulsion 0.05% twice daily into each eye of a 60 kg person (0.001 mg/kg/day), assuming that the entire dose is absorbed. No evidence of embryofetal toxicity was observed in rats or rabbits receiving cyclosporine during organogenesis at oral doses up to 17 mg/kg/day or 30 mg/kg/day, respectively. These doses in rats and rabbits are approximately 3,000 and 10,000 times greater, respectively, than the daily recommended human dose.

An oral dose of 45 mg/kg/day cyclosporine administered to rats from Day 15 of pregnancy until Day 21 postpartum produced maternal toxicity and an increase in postnatal mortality in offspring. This dose is 7,000 times greater than the daily recommended human dose. No adverse effects in dams or offspring were observed at oral doses up to 15 mg/kg/day (2,000 times greater than the daily recommended human dose).

There are no adequate and well-controlled studies of **RESTASIS®** and **RESTASIS MULTIDOSE™** in pregnant women. **RESTASIS®** and **RESTASIS MULTIDOSE™** should be administered to a pregnant woman only if clearly needed.

Lactation
Risk Summary
Cyclosporine is known to appear in human milk following systemic administration, but its presence in human milk following topical treatment has not been investigated. Although blood concentrations are undetectable following topical administration of cyclosporine ophthalmic emulsion 0.05% [see Clinical Pharmacology (12.3)], caution should be exercised when **RESTASIS®** and **RESTASIS MULTIDOSE™** are administered to a nursing woman. The developmental and health benefits of breastfeeding should be considered along with the mother's clinical need for **RESTASIS®** and **RESTASIS MULTIDOSE™** and any potential adverse effects on the breast-fed child from cyclosporine.

Pediatric Use
Safety and efficacy have not been established in pediatric patients below the age of 16.

Geriatric Use
No overall difference in safety or effectiveness has been observed between elderly and younger patients.

NONCLINICAL TOXICOLOGY
Carcinogenesis, Mutagenesis, Impairment of Fertility
Carcinogenesis: Systemic carcinogenicity studies were carried out in male and female mice and rats. In the 78-week oral (diet) mouse study, at doses of 1, 4, and 16 mg/kg/day, evidence of a statistically significant trend was found for lymphocytic lymphomas in females, and the incidence of hepatocellular carcinomas in mid-dose males significantly exceeded the control value.

In the 24-month oral (diet) rat study, conducted at 0.5, 2, and 8 mg/kg/day, pancreatic islet cell adenomas significantly exceeded the control rate in the low-dose level. The hepatocellular carcinomas and pancreatic islet cell adenomas were not dose related. The low doses in mice and rats are approximately 80 times greater (normalized to body surface area) than the daily human dose of one drop (approximately 28 mcL) of 0.05% **RESTASIS®** and **RESTASIS MULTIDOSE™** twice daily into each eye of a 60 kg person (0.001 mg/kg/ day), assuming that the entire dose is absorbed.

Mutagenesis: Cyclosporine has not been found to be mutagenic/genotoxic in the Ames Test, the V79-HGPRT Test, the micronucleus test in mice and Chinese hamsters, the chromosome-aberration tests in Chinese hamster bone-marrow, the mouse dominant lethal assay, and the DNA-repair test in sperm from treated mice. A study analyzing sister chromatid exchange (SCE) induction by cyclosporine using human lymphocytes in vitro gave indication of a positive effect (i.e., induction of SCE).

Impairment of Fertility: No impairment in fertility was demonstrated in studies in male and female rats receiving oral doses of cyclosporine up to 15 mg/kg/day (approximately 2,000 times the human daily dose of 0.001 mg/kg/day normalized to body surface area) for 9 weeks (male) and 2 weeks (female) prior to mating.

PATIENT COUNSELING INFORMATION
Handling the Container
Advise patients to not allow the tip of the container to touch the eye or any surface, as this may contaminate the emulsion. Advise patients to not touch the container to their eye to avoid the potential for injury to the eye.

Use with Contact Lenses
RESTASIS® and **RESTASIS MULTIDOSE™** should not be administered while wearing contact lenses. Patients with decreased tear production typically should not wear contact lenses. Advise patients that if contact lenses are worn, they should be removed prior to the administration of the emulsion. Lenses may be reinserted 15 minutes following administration of **RESTASIS®** and **RESTASIS MULTIDOSE™** ophthalmic emulsion.

Administration
Advise patients that the emulsion from one individual single-use vial is to be used immediately after opening for administration to one or both eyes, and the remaining contents should be discarded immediately after administration.

Advise patients to read the Instructions for Use for detailed first-time use instructions for the multidose bottle.

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RAMS HOMING IN ON SUPER BOWL TITLE

BY CRAIG ELLENPORT

FOR 54 YEARS, NO TEAM HAD EVER played a Super Bowl in its home stadium – until the Tampa Bay Buccaneers did it last season. When the Los Angeles Rams take the field at SoFi Stadium for Super Bowl LVI, it will be two years in a row.

Next year's Super Bowl is in Glendale, Ariz., so that's encouraging news for the Cardinals. But let's not get ahead of ourselves. First, there's the question of whether or not the Rams can follow in the Bucs' footsteps and hoist the Lombardi Trophy on their home turf.

It certainly wasn't easy for them to get to this point. After dispatching the Cardinals in the Wild Card round, they needed a last-second field goal to defeat the Buccaneers, then had to overcome the 49ers – a team that beat them twice in the regular season – in the NFC title game.

It was just three years ago that the Rams were in Super Bowl LIII, where they fell to the Patriots in Sean McVay's second year as head coach. And while they have posted a winning record every season since McVay took over in 2017, an envious accomplishment in the modern NFL, there's unfinished business at hand: claiming the second Super Bowl title in franchise history and first while stationed in L.A. To that end, they've invested heavily to bring in an array of marquee talent.

In his first season with the Rams, Matthew Stafford's standout play has the team on the brink of its second Super Bowl title.

AP Images

In 2019, the Rams traded two first-round picks and a fourth-rounder to acquire Pro Bowl cornerback Jalen Ramsey. Last January, they sent two first-round picks, a third-round pick, starting quarterback Jared Goff, and defensive end Michael Brockers to the Lions for QB Matthew Stafford.

The big moves continued into mid-season. After Week 8, the Rams traded second- and third-round picks to Denver for linebacker Von Miller, the MVP of Super Bowl 50. Ten days later, they signed former Pro Bowl receiver

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Terrance Williams/AP Images

On a team rich with veteran players, third-year safety Taylor Rapp (left) has grown into an important role. His four interceptions tied for the team lead and his 91 tackles ranked second. No one on the Rams has more experience than left tackle Andrew Whitworth (right), who in his 16th NFL season has helped keep L.A.'s offense among the league's best.

Odell Beckham Jr., who had just been released by the Browns.

Talk about going for it. The Rams epitomize the phrase "Super Bowl or bust," and, so far, the results have been favorable. The Rams won their third NFC West title and earned their fourth playoff berth in the five years under McVay.

OFFENSE

The Rams were seventh in the NFL in scoring (27.1 points per game) and ninth in total offense (372.1 yards per game). It's a balanced attack, though it's predicated on the passing game. And that starts with Stafford.

Sure enough, the 2021 Rams finished fifth in the league in passing (273.1 yards per game). Stafford completed 67.2 percent of his passes for 4,886 yards and 41 touchdowns with a passer rating of 102.9. The 41 TDs tied a career high and the passer rating was his second-best ever.

For all the implied pressure being put on him to deliver a title, Stafford is at his finest when under pressure on the field. According to NextGen Stats, he had an NFL-best 139.6 passer rating when facing the blitz.

It helps to have good weapons, and the Rams feature one of the best. Through his first four NFL seasons, Cooper Kupp had established himself as a solid, reliable possession receiver. In 2021, he's become unstoppable, with perhaps the best season ever by a wide receiver, leading the league in receptions (145), receiving yards (1,947), and TD catches (16). The only player in NFL history with more receiving yards in one season is Calvin Johnson in 2012. And Johnson's quarterback that year? Stafford.

Kupp's stellar season was all the more important once veteran Robert Woods was lost to injury in November. Fortunately, the Rams had signed Beckham by then. In eight regular-season games with L.A., Beckham contributed 27 catches and five scores, and he's been equally productive in the playoffs.

"I kinda came late to the party," says Beckham, "but it still feels very special, like I've [always] been here."

When Stafford isn't throwing to Kupp or Beckham, another dangerous target is Van Jefferson, a big-play threat who averaged 16.0 yards on his 50 receptions. The safety valve is tight end Tyler Higbee, who caught 61 passes for 560 yards.

The running game became a group effort after starting back Cam Akers suffered a

2021 RESULTS

LOS ANGELES RAMS (15-5)

9/12	CHICAGO	34-14	W
9/19	Indianapolis	27-24	W
9/26	TAMPA BAY	34-24	W
10/3	ARIZONA	20-37	L
10/7	Seattle	26-17	W
10/17	N.Y. Giants	38-11	W
10/24	DETROIT	28-19	W
10/31	Houston	38-22	W
11/7	TENNESSEE	16-28	L
11/15	San Francisco	10-31	L
11/28	Green Bay	28-36	L
12/5	JACKSONVILLE	37-7	W
12/13	Arizona	30-23	W
12/21	SEATTLE	20-10	W
12/26	Minnesota	30-23	W
1/2	Baltimore	20-19	W
1/9	SAN FRAN.	(OT) 24-27	L
NFC Playoffs			
1/17	ARIZONA	34-11	W
1/23	Tampa Bay	30-27	W
1/30	SAN FRANCISCO	20-17	W

Kyusung Gong/AP Images

Terrance Williams/AP Images

Johnny Hekker (left) remains one of the NFL's top punters, this season averaging 44.2 yards per punt. Opponents also need to be aware of his arm, as he's thrown 24 passes during his 10-year career. Van Jefferson (right) is the Rams' top deep threat. His 50 catches during the regular season included touchdown grabs of 79 and 67 yards.

torn Achilles in July. Darrell Henderson Jr. carried the load early in the season, along with Sony Michel, who was acquired from the Patriots in August. Michel came on late to be the team's leading rusher with 845 yards. But since the playoffs began, the team has benefitted from the return of Akers, who was activated in Week 16. The strong and shifty back, who rushed for 625 yards as a rookie last season, has been full-go in the playoffs.

The Rams' offensive line is anchored by a future Hall of Famer in left tackle Andrew Whitworth. After 11 years in Cincinnati, the 6-7, 330-pounder signed with the Rams in 2017 – and it's not a coincidence they have been winning ever since. Whitworth turned 40 in December – making him the first 40-year-old to start at left tackle in NFL history. He is bookended by right tackle Rob Havenstein, who checks in at 6-8, 330.

DEFENSE

With numerous potential Hall of Famers starting on defense, it's no surprise the Rams held seven opponents to 19-or-fewer points this season. Three-time Defensive Player of the Year Aaron Donald causes the most

THE YEAR WARNER RE-WROTE THE SCRIPT

Doug Mills/AP Images

Every Rams trip to the Super Bowl brings with it a movie-worthy subplot – and in the case of their Super Bowl XXXIV squad, the story actually made the big screen with December's release of *American Underdog: The Kurt Warner Story*.

Other scripts saw Jack Youngblood play on a broken left leg in Super Bowl XIV, the Rams take on a supporting role when the Patriots launched their dynasty in Super Bowl XXXVI, and Sean McVay become the youngest head coach in Super Bowl history in Super Bowl LIII.

But **Kurt Warner**'s amazing and unlikely story stands alone. He went undrafted out of Northern Iowa in 1994, then stocked grocery shelves to make a living before spending two seasons in the Arena Football League and another in NFL Europe. He came to the Rams as their third-string QB and was expected to back up starter Trent Green in 1999.

But then Green was injured in the preseason and Warner was thrust into the spotlight. All he did was lead the Rams on a magical offensive journey that became known as the "Greatest Show on Turf." With the likes of Torry Holt and Isaac Bruce in the receiving corps and the versatile Marshall Faulk heading up the backfield, the Rams scored a then-NFL record 526 points and topped the Titans in a thriller in Super Bowl XXXIV for the franchise's only Super Bowl title.

"More than anything, I wasn't on anyone's radar," said Warner of his meteoric rise. "Couple that with the entire season that goes with it, from what we did all year to the way we won the Super Bowl to the fact that I might not have even been in football if not for a few weird turns, isn't that the craziest?"

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havoc up front, helping the Rams rank third in the NFL with 50 sacks. With three-time All-Pro cornerback Jalen Ramsey leading the secondary, the Rams actually had more interceptions (19) than TD passes allowed (17, second-fewest in the league).

"They always play good defense," says Buccaneers offensive coordinator Byron Leftwich. "They're good at all three levels. They understand what they're doing, they're well-coached, and they've got exceptional players who know how to play this game, including a couple of guys who will have Gold Jackets on when it's all said and done."

Donald is at the top of that list. An All-Pro seven straight years, he had 12.5 sacks in 2021, becoming just the fourth player since 1982 with eight-or-more sacks in each of his first eight NFL seasons.

Donald is part of a three-man defensive front that not only collapses the pocket at will but also is stout against the run. The Rams ranked third in the NFC in rushing defense (103.2 yards per game). Nose tackle Greg Gaines, who also chipped in with 4.5 sacks, gets a lot of credit for that. After two seasons as a backup, Gaines started 13 games in 2021 and has been a big factor in the team's run defense.

Since the mid-season acquisition of Miller, the combination of he and Donald has been particularly hazardous for opponents. Donald and Miller both had 19 tackles for loss, tied for fourth in the league.

"Pick your poison," says future Hall of Fame QB Drew Brees. "You can't block both of these guys."

Of course, outside linebacker Leonard Floyd has been equally dangerous. Floyd was second to Donald on the team with 9.5 sacks, and he has 20 in his two seasons in L.A.

While safety Jordan Fuller led the team with 113 tackles, he went down with a late-season ankle injury. In Fuller's absence, the Rams' leading active tacklers are inside linebacker Troy Reeder and strong safety Taylor Rapp, who also was tied with Ramsey for the team lead with four interceptions.

Ramsey didn't lose a step this season. In addition to his four picks, he was the only player in 2021 with both 15-plus passes defensed (16) and five-plus tackles for loss (9).

LOS ANGELES RAMS ALL-TIME PLAYOFF RESULTS

(25 wins, 27 losses)

Year	Round	Opponent	Score	W/L
1945	NFL Championship	Washington	15-14	W
(Played as Cleveland Rams 1937-1945; moved to Los Angeles in 1946)				
1949	NFL Championship	Philadelphia	0-14	L
1950	NFL Divisional	Chicago Bears	24-14	W
	NFL Championship	at Cleveland	28-30	L
1951	NFL Championship	Cleveland	24-17	W
1952	NFL Divisional	at Detroit	21-31	L
1955	NFL Championship	Cleveland	14-38	L
1967	NFL Divisional	at Green Bay	7-28	L
1969	NFL Divisional	at Minnesota	20-23	L
1973	NFC Divisional	at Dallas	16-27	L
1974	NFC Divisional	Washington	19-10	W
	NFC Championship	at Minnesota	10-14	L
1975	NFC Divisional	St. Louis Cardinals	35-23	W
	NFC Championship	Dallas	7-37	L
1976	NFC Divisional	at Dallas	14-12	W
	NFC Championship	at Minnesota	13-24	L
1977	NFC Divisional	Minnesota	7-14	L
1978	NFC Divisional	Minnesota	34-10	W
	NFC Championship	Dallas	0-28	L
1979	NFC Divisional	at Dallas	21-19	W
	NFC Championship	at Tampa Bay	9-0	W
	Super Bowl XIV	**Pittsburgh**	**19-31**	**L**
1980	NFC Wild Card	at Dallas	13-34	L
1983	NFC Wild Card	at Dallas	24-17	W
	NFC Divisional	at Washington	7-51	L
1984	NFC Wild Card	New York Giants	13-16	L
1985	NFC Divisional	Dallas	20-0	W
	NFC Championship	at Chicago	0-24	L
1986	NFC Wild Card	at Washington	7-19	L
1988	NFC Wild Card	at Minnesota	17-28	L
1989	NFC Wild Card	at Philadelphia	21-7	W
	NFC Divisional	at New York Giants	19-13 (OT)	W
	NFC Championship	at San Francisco	3-30	L
(Played as Los Angeles Rams 1946-1994; moved to St. Louis in 1995)				
1999	NFC Divisional	Minnesota	49-37	W
	NFC Championship	Tampa Bay	11-6	W
	Super Bowl XXXIV	**Tennessee**	**23-16**	**W**
2000	NFC Wild Card	at New Orleans	28-31	L
2001	NFC Divisional	Green Bay	45-17	W
	NFC Championship	Philadelphia	29-24	W
	Super Bowl XXXVI	**New England**	**17-20**	**L**
2003	NFC Divisional	Carolina	23-29 (OT)	L
2004	NFC Wild Card	at Seattle	27-20	W
	NFC Divisional	at Atlanta	17-47	L
(Played as St. Louis Rams 1995-2015; moved to Los Angeles in 2016)				
2017	NFC Wild Card	Atlanta	13-26	L
2018	NFC Divisional	Dallas	30-22	W
	NFC Championship	at New Orleans	26-23 (OT)	W
	Super Bowl LIII	**New England**	**3-13**	**L**
2020	NFC Wild Card	at Seattle	30-20	W
	NFC Divisional	at Green Bay	18-32	L
2021	NFC Wild Card	Arizona	34-11	W
	NFC Divisional	at Tampa Bay	30-27	W
	NFC Championship	San Francisco	20-17	W

SPECIAL TEAMS

Third-year kicker Matt Gay earned his first Pro Bowl nod in 2021 after making 32 of 34 field-goal attempts, including 4-of-5 from 50-plus yards with a long of 55.

Punter Johnny Hekker is a four-time Pro Bowler. He averaged 44.2 yards per punt this season with a net of 42.6. For those looking for trick plays on the Super Bowl stage, it's worth noting that Hekker has 24 career pass attempts (including playoffs) with one going for a TD.

Backup wide receiver Brandon Powell has emerged among a variety of punt and kick returners. He averaged 26.0 yards per kick return, and though he only returned six punts, one of them was a 61-yarder for a score.

GAME PLAN

McVay oversaw a prolific offense in 2018 that carried the Rams to Super Bowl LIII – only to see them held to a mere three points in that loss to the Patriots. It's likely something that haunts the offensive mastermind, so don't be surprised if there's a concerted effort on L.A.'s part to get on the board quickly this time around.

It's fair to expect a sense of urgency from these Rams. Nothing in the NFL is guaranteed, so veterans like Stafford, Donald, Whitworth, and Miller are well aware this might be their last best chance at a ring.

Still, don't look for the Rams to air it out. Stafford has attempted more than 40 passes in only four games this season, and three of those were losses. The team has more success when the offense is well-balanced. The week off before the Super Bowl will help several players who have been on the mend, but perhaps none as much as Akers. If the Rams can get him involved and productive, that opens the door for play-action passes and the Stafford-Kupp connection.

And if the Rams can get a lead, look for Donald and the defense to pin back their ears and present a relentless pass rush.

Super Bowl title or bust? The Rams are almost there, and they're ready to take that last step – right in front of their home fans in L.A.

***Craig Ellenport** is a senior editor at* Sports Illustrated. *He has covered the NFL for 25 years and is the author of* NFL 100: The Greatest Moments of the NFL's Century *(Triumph).*

NFC CHAMPIONSHIP GAME

L.A. RAMS 20, San Francisco 17

The seventh time was the charm for the Rams, who solved their divisional rival 49ers when it counted most, rallying for a 20-17 victory that has them both hosting and playing in Super Bowl LVI at SoFi Stadium.

Trailing 17-7 with their season on the line, the Rams scored the game's final 13 points, marking the largest fourth-quarter comeback in NFC Championship Game history. The win was their first over the 49ers since 2018.

SOFI STADIUM
Inglewood, Calif. **Jan. 30, 2022**

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
San Francisco	0	10	7	0	17
L.A. Rams	0	7	0	13	20

2nd Quarter

LAR Kupp 16 pass from Stafford (Gay kick), 8:50
SF Samuel 44 pass from Garoppolo (Gould kick), 6:19
SF Gould 38 FG, 0:02

3rd Quarter

SF Kittle 16 pass from Garoppolo (Gould kick), 2:04

4th Quarter

LAR Kupp 11 pass from Stafford (Gay kick), 13:35
LAR Gay 40 FG, 6:53
LAR Gay 30 FG, 1:49

San Francisco seemed in control when QB Jimmy Garoppolo found George Kittle free in the end zone for a 16-yard touchdown late in the third quarter. But the Rams – after being held in check for most of the night – came alive on their final three possessions while limiting the 49ers to two first downs and 38 total yards.

On the first drive, Matthew Stafford's 32-yard pass to Cooper Kupp ignited the offense, and he then twice connected with tight end Kendall Blanton before going back to Kupp for an 11-yard touchdown two minutes into the final quarter.

The Rams' defense would stop the 49ers at midfield, and Stafford went back to work, finding Odell Beckham Jr. along the sideline for a 29-yard completion and going to Kupp for a 16-yard gain. The drive stalled at the San Francisco 22, but Matt Gay's 40-yard field goal with 6:49 to play tied things at 17-17.

After the 49ers went three-and-out, the Rams took over at their own 39. This time it was a methodical 10-play march that included two third-down conversions, bringing the ball deep into San Francisco territory. That set up Gay for what proved to be the game-winner, a 30-yard field goal shortly after the two-minute warning.

The 49ers had a final opportunity, but after an incompletion and a 3-yard loss, Garoppolo – in a desperate attempt to avoid an Aaron Donald sack – tried an underhand toss that deflected off his receiver and into the hands of linebacker Travin Howard for an interception.

Stafford finished the game 31-of-45 passing for 337 yards and two TDs, with Kupp (11 receptions, 142 yards) and Beckham (9 receptions, 113 yards) both having big nights. Equally impressive, the Rams' defense stonewalled a normally effective 49ers ground attack, allowing just 50 yards on 20 carries. Free safety Eric Weddle, who signed in December to provide depth, led the team with nine tackles.

THE BEST USE THE BEST

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E. STANLEY KROENKE OWNER/CHAIRMAN

Regarded as one of the world's leading sports proprietors, **E. STANLEY KROENKE**'s teams have won titles in the NFL, NHL, MLS, and the National Lacrosse League. Kroenke's sports holdings include serving as the majority shareholder of London's Arsenal FC (Barclays English Premier League), which won its 13th FA Cup in 2017. From 2000-2014, Kroenke owned the NBA's Denver Nuggets and the NHL's Colorado Avalanche, which are now a part of a family trust. Kroenke's Denver-based company, Kroenke Sports & Entertainment (KSE), owns the Colorado Rapids of Major League Soccer and the Colorado Mammoth of the National Lacrosse League. Kroenke also owns Altitude Sports & Entertainment, which produces Rams preseason games.

"It is evident that Stan knows how to achieve success in the sports world," Rams general manager Les Snead said. "His teams have won championships in five different sports, and he has experience in building a contender. The success we have experienced through the NFL draft and free agency would not have been possible without Stan's support and his willingness to take risks to build our team."

According to the *New York Times*, 1997 was the first season to allow NFL owners to own cross-sport franchises. Among current NFL ownership, only two have had three teams win a playoff game/series in the same year in North America. Kroenke was the latest to accomplish the feat as the Avalanche and Nuggets also made remarkable playoff runs during the 2018-19 season. Both the Avalanche and Nuggets secured first-round playoff wins, and the Rams advanced to Super Bowl LIII.

Kroenke's journey to bring professional football back to Los Angeles culminated on Jan. 12, 2016, when NFL owners ratified his proposal to return the Rams to Southern California.

Eleven years after league owners unanimously approved Kroenke to assume sole ownership of the franchise in 2010, he celebrated the opening of SoFi Stadium and Hollywood Park – a 298-acre development with a 70,240-seat stadium as its crown jewel, which is hosting Super Bowl LVI to mark the culmination of its first season with fans in attendance.

The Rams become the second team in NFL history to make it to a Super Bowl hosted in their home stadium. Kroenke's Rams have appeared in the Super Bowl four times out of their nine playoff runs.

E. Stanley Kroenke, named after baseball legends Enos Slaughter and Stan Musial, was born in Cole Camp, Mo., and grew up in Mora, Mo. Kroenke and his wife, Ann, have a daughter, Whitney, and a son, Josh, Vice Chairman of KSE and KSE UK. In 2017, Kroenke and Josh became owners of two eSports franchises – the Los Angeles Gladiators of the Overwatch League and the Los Angeles Guerrillas of the Call of Duty League.

Kroenke holds undergraduate and graduate degrees from the University of Missouri and he is a member of the Missouri Sports Hall of Fame (2009 Enshrinement Class).

LOS ANGELES RAMS TEAM OFFICIALS

E. Stanley Kroenke
Owner/Chairman

Kevin Demoff
Chief Operating Officer

Les Snead
General Manager

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Vice President, Football and Business Administration

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Senior Personnel Advisor

Brian Xanders
Senior Personnel Executive

Ray Farmer
Senior Personnel Executive

John McKay
Director, Pro Scouting

James Gladstone
Director, Scouting Strategy

Marty Barrett
Senior Personnel Executive

Ted Monago
Assistant Director, College Scouting

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Director, Football Operations

Brendan Burger
Director, Football Equipment

Dan Dmytrisin
Director, Video

Jacques McClendon
Director, Football Affairs

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Byron Cunningham
Director, Rehabilitation/ Assistant Athletic Trainer

Tyler Williams
Director, Sports Science

Justin Lovett
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Joey Blake
Director, Performance Nutrition and Wellness

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Eric Dickerson
Vice President, Business Development

Stephanie Cheng
Head of Special Projects

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Vice President, Communications

Joanna Hunter
Vice President, Corporate Affairs

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Vice President, Community Affairs and Engagement

Maria Camacho
Director, Government Affairs

Keely Fimbres
Director, Cheerleaders and Mascot

Johnathan Franklin
Director, Social Justice and Football Development

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Head of Employee Experience

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Treasurer

Michael Brandi
Controller

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Chief Marketing Officer

Margaret Plouffe
Vice President, Marketing Strategy and Operations

Marissa Daly
Vice President and General Manager, Rams Studios

Lexi Vonderlieth
Vice President, Brand Strategy

Marty Turman
Vice President, Fan Marketing and Insights

Jory Hirsh
Senior Director, Media & Talent

Cory Befort
Senior Director, Creative Services

Sara Schuler
Senior Director, Game Presentation and Brand Experience

Chadwick Richardson
Director, Game Production

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Chief Commercial Officer

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Vice President, Partnership Sales

Mike O'Keefe
Vice President, Partnership Development

Brittany Ramos
Senior Director, Partnership Marketing

Joanna Yiu
Director, Partnership Operations

Megan Fogarty
Director, Partnership Sales

Chris Edwards
Director, Partnership Sales

Roderick Stephens
Director, Partnership Marketing

TECHNOLOGY
Skarpi Hedinsson
Chief Technology Officer

Jeff Graves
Director, Information Technology

TICKETING AND MEMBER SERVICES
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Vice President, Strategy and Ticketing

Hadley Rossitter
Vice President, Ticket and Premium Sales

Steven Moore
Director, Ticket Operations

Meagan Roberts
Senior Director, Client Services

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SEAN McVAY Head Coach

On Jan. 12, 2017, Los Angeles Rams Owner/Chairman E. Stanley Kroenke named Sean McVay the franchise's 23rd full-time head coach. With his hiring, McVay became the youngest coach in modern NFL history at 30 years old.

In 2021, McVay produced his fifth consecutive winning season with the Rams, the team's longest streak since having eight straight winning seasons (1973-1980). This year's 12-5 record earned L.A. its fourth postseason appearance in McVay's first five seasons and his third NFC West title.

Last off-season, the Rams traded for QB Matthew Stafford. In his first year with the team, Stafford reached a career milestone of 50,000 passing yards in only 182 games, making him the fastest to accomplish this feat.

Also under McVay's watch, WR Cooper Kupp has enjoyed a historic 2021 season, becoming the fourth "Triple Crown" winner in NFL history. Kupp led the NFL with 145 receptions, 1,947 receiving yards, and 16 receiving touchdowns.

The Rams' 2021 defense added extra star power as well with the addition of OLB Von Miller before the trade deadline. Miller was a big contributor to the Rams' 50-sack total that ranked in the top three across the league.

McVay graduated from Miami University (Ohio), where he played wide receiver from 2004-07 and earned Miami's 2007 Scholar-Athlete Award. His grandfather John served in various roles for the San Francisco 49ers from 1979-1995, including vice president/director of football operations from 1983-1994. During his 49ers tenure, he oversaw five Super Bowl championship squads and earned induction into the 49ers Hall of Fame in 2013.

ASSISTANT COACHES

Thad Bogardus.....Assistant Linebackers
Thomas Brown.....Assistant Head Coach/Running Backs
Kevin Carberry.....Offensive Line
Jonathan Cooley.....Assistant Secondary
Joe DeCamillis.....Special Teams Coordinator
Marcus Dixon.....Assistant Defensive Line
Ejiro Evero.....Secondary/Pass Game Coordinator
Eric Henderson.....Defensive Line/Run Game Coordinator
Nick Jones.....Offensive Assistant
Zak Kromer.....Offensive Assistant
Raheem Morris.....Defensive Coordinator
Kevin O'Connell.....Offensive Coordinator
Chris O'Hara.....Offensive Assistant
Wes Phillips.....Tight Ends/Pass Game Coordinator
Zac Robinson.....Assistant Quarterbacks
Chris Shula.....Linebackers
Dwayne Stukes.....Assistant Special Teams
Eric Yarber.....Wide Receivers

LOS ANGELES RAMS ALPHABETICAL ROSTER

NO	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	BIRTH DATE	NFL EXP	COLLEGE	HOW ACQUIRED
23	Akers, Cam	RB	5-10	217	6/22/99	2	Florida State	D2A '20
55	Allen, Brian	OL	6-2	303	10/11/95	4	Michigan State	D4A '18
72	Anchrum Jr., Tremayne	OL	6-2	314	6/24/98	2	Clemson	D7C '20
3	Beckham Jr., Odell	WR	5-11	198	11/5/92	8	LSU	FA '21
86	Blanton, Kendall	TE	6-6	262	11/10/95	1	Missouri	FA '19
39	Brooks Jr., Antoine	LB	5-11	215	10/28/97	1	Maryland	W(Pitt.) '21
95	Brown III, Bobby	DL	6-4	324	8/7/00	R	Texas A&M	D4A '21
26	Burgess, Terrell	S	5-11	202	11/12/98	2	Utah	D3B '20
93	Copeland, Marquise	DL	6-2	287	5/9/97	1	Cincinnati	FA '19
63	Corbett, Austin	OL	6-4	306	9/5/95	4	Nevada	T(Cle.) '19
21	Deayon, Dont'e	CB	5-9	159	1/28/94	4	Boise State	FA '18
99	Donald, Aaron	DL	6-1	280	5/23/91	8	Pittsburgh	D1B '14
73	Edwards, David	OL	6-6	308	3/20/97	3	Wisconsin	D5 '19
71	Evans, Bobby	OL	6-4	312	3/24/97	3	Oklahoma	D3C '19
54	Floyd, Leonard	OLB	6-5	240	9/8/92	6	Georgia	FA '20
34	Funk, Jake	RB	5-10	205	1/11/98	R	Maryland	D7A '21
91	Gaines, Greg	DL	6-1	312	5/6/96	3	Washington	D4 '19
48	Garrett, Chris	OLB	6-4	245	6/12/98	R	Concordia-St. Paul	D7C '21
8	Gay, Matt	K	6-0	232	3/15/94	3	Utah	FA '20
43	Gervase, Jake	S	6-1	212	9/18/95	1	Iowa	FA '19
46	Haley, Grant	DB	5-9	190	1/6/96	3	Penn State	FA '21
79	Havenstein, Rob	OL	6-8	330	5/13/92	7	Wisconsin	D2 '15
6	Hekker, Johnny	P	6-5	241	2/8/90	10	Oregon State	FA '12
89	Higbee, Tyler	TE	6-6	255	1/1/93	6	Western Kentucky	D4A '16
96	Hoecht, Michael	DL	6-4	310	10/5/97	1	Brown	FA '20
58	Hollins, Justin	LB	6-5	248	1/15/96	3	Oregon	W(Den.) '20
88	Hopkins, Brycen	TE	6-4	245	3/27/97	2	Purdue	D4 '20
32	Howard, Travin	ILB	6-1	219	5/10/96	2	TCU	D7A '18
38	Howell, Buddy	RB	6-1	218	3/27/96	4	Florida Atlantic	W(Hou.) '21
68	Jackson, Alaric	OL	6-7	285	7/14/98	R	Iowa	UDFA '21
12	Jefferson, Van	WR	6-1	200	7/26/96	2	Florida	D2B '20
10	Kupp, Cooper	WR	6-2	208	6/15/93	5	Eastern Washington	D3A '17
52	Lewis, Terrell	OLB	6-5	262	8/25/98	2	Alabama	D3A '20
22	Long Jr., David	CB	5-11	196	2/6/98	3	Michigan	D3B '19
25	Michel, Sony	RB	5-11	215	2/17/95	4	Georgia	T(NE) '21
40	Miller, Von	OLB	6-3	250	3/26/89	11	Texas A&M	T(Den.) '21
70	Noteboom, Joe	OL	6-5	321	6/19/95	4	TCU	D3 '18
45	Okoronkwo, Ogbonnia	OLB	6-2	253	4/24/95	3	Oklahoma	D5B '18
42	Orzech, Matt	LS	6-3	245	4/12/95	2	Azusa Pacific	W(Tenn.) '21
16	Perkins, Bryce	QB	6-3	214	12/20/96	1	Virginia	FA '20
19	Powell, Brandon	WR	5-8	181	9/12/95	4	Florida	FA '21
5	Ramsey, Jalen	CB	6-1	208	10/24/94	6	Florida State	T(Jack.) '19
24	Rapp, Taylor	S	6-0	208	12/22/97	3	Washington	D2 '19
51	Reeder, Troy	ILB	6-3	245	9/13/94	3	Delaware	FA '19
94	Robinson, A'Shawn	DL	6-4	330	3/21/95	6	Alabama	FA '20
56	Rozeboom, Christian	LB	6-2	230	1/30/97	1	South Dakota State	FA '21
33	Scott, Nick	S	5-11	201	5/17/95	3	Penn State	D7A '19
65	Shelton, Coleman	OL	6-4	299	7/28/95	3	Washington	FA '19
18	Skowronek, Ben	WR	6-3	224	6/27/97	R	Notre Dame	D7B '21
9	Stafford, Matthew	QB	6-3	220	2/7/88	13	Georgia	T(Det.) '21
77	Whitworth, Andrew	OL	6-7	330	12/12/81	16	LSU	FA '17
11	Williams, Darious	CB	5-9	187	3/15/93	4	Alabama-Birmingham	W(Balt.) '18
13	Wolford, John	QB	6-1	200	10/16/95	2	Wake Forest	FA '19

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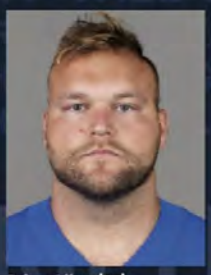
LOS ANGELES RAMS

Cam Akers (23)
Running Back



Brian Allen (55)
Offensive Lineman

Tremayne Anchrum Jr. (72)
Offensive Lineman

Odell Beckham Jr. (3)
Wide Receiver

Kendall Blanton (86)
Tight End

Antoine Brooks Jr. (39)
Linebacker

Bobby Brown III (95)
Defensive Lineman

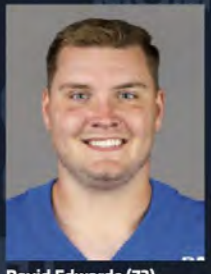
Terrell Burgess (26)
Safety

Marquise Copeland (93)
Defensive Lineman

Austin Corbett (63)
Offensive Lineman

Dont'e Deayon (21)
Cornerback

Aaron Donald (99)
Defensive Lineman



David Edwards (73)
Offensive Lineman

Bobby Evans (71)
Offensive Lineman

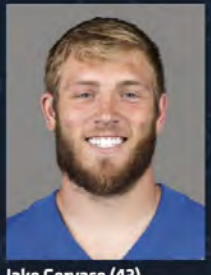
Leonard Floyd (54)
Outside Linebacker

Jake Funk (34)
Running Back

Greg Gaines (91)
Defensive Lineman

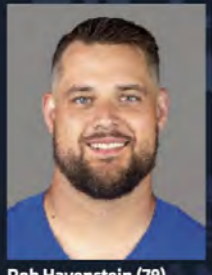
Chris Garrett (48)
Outside Linebacker

Matt Gay (8)
Kicker



Jake Gervase (43)
Safety

Grant Haley (46)
Defensive Back



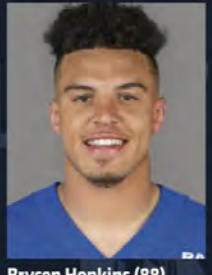
Rob Havenstein (79)
Offensive Lineman

Johnny Hekker (6)
Punter

Tyler Higbee (89)
Tight End

Michael Hoecht (96)
Defensive Lineman

Justin Hollins (58)
Linebacker



Brycen Hopkins (88)
Tight End

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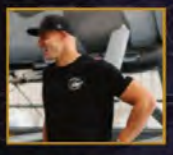
MIKE DAVIS
ATLANTA FALCONS

BRADLEY BOZEMAN
BALTIMORE RAVENS

HARRISON PHILLIPS
BUFFALO BILLS

DJ MOORE
CAROLINA PANTHERS



JIMMY GRAHAM
CHICAGO BEARS

SAM HUBBARD
CINCINNATI BENGALS

DENZEL WARD
CLEVELAND BROWNS

DAK PRESCOTT
DALLAS COWBOYS

JUSTIN SIMMONS
DENVER BRONCOS

JASON CABINDA
DETROIT LIONS

AARON JONES
GREEN BAY PACKERS

JUSTIN REID
HOUSTON TEXANS

KENNY MOORE II
INDIANAPOLIS COLTS

MYLES JACK
JACKSONVILLE JAGUARS

TYRANN MATHIEU
KANSAS CITY CHIEFS

DARREN WALLER
LAS VEGAS RAIDERS

COREY LINSLEY
LOS ANGELES CHARGERS

ANDREW WHITWORTH
LOS ANGELES RAMS

JEROME BAKER
MIAMI DOLPHINS

ANTHONY BARR
MINNESOTA VIKINGS

LAWRENCE GUY
NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS

CAMERON JORDAN
NEW ORLEANS SAINTS

LOGAN RYAN
NEW YORK GIANTS

QUINNEN WILLIAMS
NEW YORK JETS

JASON KELCE
PHILADELPHIA EAGLES

CAMERON HEYWARD
PITTSBURGH STEELERS

ARIK ARMSTEAD
SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS

TYLER LOCKETT
SEATTLE SEAHAWKS

MIKE EVANS
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TENNESSEE TITANS

JONATHAN ALLEN
WASHINGTON FOOTBALL TEAM

LOS ANGELES RAMS

Travin Howard (32)
Inside Linebacker

Buddy Howell (38)
Running Back

Alaric Jackson (68)
Offensive Lineman

Van Jefferson (12)
Wide Receiver

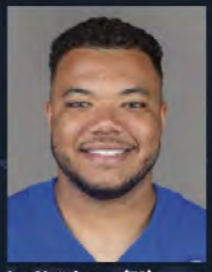
Cooper Kupp (10)
Wide Receiver

Terrell Lewis (52)
Outside Linebacker

David Long Jr. (22)
Cornerback

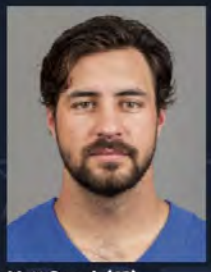
Sony Michel (25)
Running Back

Von Miller (40)
Outside Linebacker



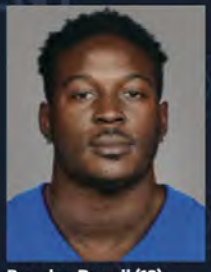
Joe Noteboom (70)
Offensive Lineman

Ogbonnia Okoronkwo (45)
Outside Linebacker



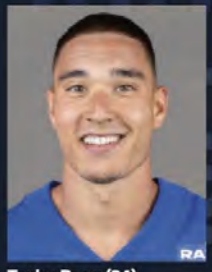
Matt Orzech (42)
Long Snapper

Bryce Perkins (16)
Quarterback



Brandon Powell (19)
Wide Receiver

Jalen Ramsey (5)
Cornerback



Taylor Rapp (24)
Safety

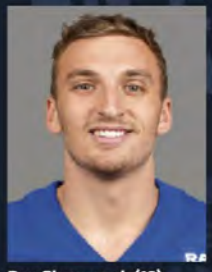
Troy Reeder (51)
Inside Linebacker

A'Shawn Robinson (94)
Defensive Lineman

Christian Rozeboom (56)
Linebacker

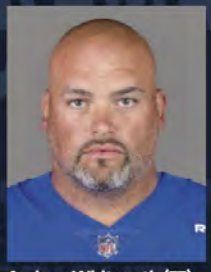
Nick Scott (33)
Safety

Coleman Shelton (65)
Offensive Lineman



Ben Skowronek (18)
Wide Receiver

Matthew Stafford (9)
Quarterback



Andrew Whitworth (77)
Offensive Lineman

Darious Williams (11)
Cornerback

John Wolford (13)
Quarterback

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LOS ANGELES RAMS
STATS / ROSTER / LINEUPS

STATISTICAL LEADERS

PASSING	COMP-ATT	PCT	YDS	TD	INT	RTNG
MATTHEW STAFFORD	404-601	67.2	4886	41	17	102.9
JOHN WOLFORD	1-4	25.0	5	0	1	0.0

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
SONY MICHEL	208	845	4.1	39	4
DARRELL HENDERSON JR.	149	688	4.6	29	5

RECEIVING	NO	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
COOPER KUPP	145	1947	13.4	59	16
TYLER HIGBEE	61	560	9.2	37	5
VAN JEFFERSON	50	802	16.0	79	6
ROBERT WOODS	45	556	12.4	28	4
DARRELL HENDERSON JR.	29	176	6.1	25	3
ODELL BECKHAM JR.	27	305	11.3	54	5

DEFENSE	TACKLES	ASSISTS	TOTAL	SACKS	PD	FF
JORDAN FULLER	63	50	113	0.0	5	0
TAYLOR RAPP	62	29	91	1.5	5	0
TROY REEDER	48	42	90	2.0	6	0
AARON DONALD	38	46	84	12.5	4	4
JALEN RAMSEY	62	15	77	0.0	16	1
DARIOUS WILLIAMS	60	11	71	0.0	9	0
LEONARD FLOYD	37	33	70	9.5	3	1
A'SHAWN ROBINSON	33	34	67	2.0	0	2

INTERCEPTIONS	NO	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
JALEN RAMSEY	4	41	10.3	25	0
TAYLOR RAPP	4	31	7.8	18	0

KICK RETURNS	RET	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
BRANDON POWELL	8	208	26.0	65	0

PUNT RETURNS	RET	FC	AVG	LONG	TD
BRANDON POWELL	6	4	22.2	61	1

PUNTING	NO	AVG	NET	TCHBK	IN/20	LONG
JOHNNY HEKKER	51	44.2	42.6	1	23	59

FIELD GOALS	TOTAL	1-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50+
MATT GAY	32/34	0/0	6/6	15/15	7/8	4/5

OFFENSIVE DEPTH CHART

WR	3	ODELL BECKHAM JR.
	19	BRANDON POWELL
TE	89	TYLER HIGBEE
	86	KENDALL BLANTON
LT	77	ANDREW WHITWORTH
	70	JOE NOTEBOOM
LG	73	DAVID EDWARDS
	72	TREMAYNE ANCHRUM JR.
C	55	BRIAN ALLEN
	65	COLEMAN SHELTON
RG	63	AUSTIN CORBETT
	71	BOBBY EVANS
RT	79	ROB HAVENSTEIN
	68	ALARIC JACKSON
WR	10	COOPER KUPP
WR	12	VAN JEFFERSON
	18	BEN SKOWRONEK
QB	9	MATTHEW STAFFORD
	13	JOHN WOLFORD
RB	23	CAM AKERS
	25	SONY MICHEL

DEFENSIVE DEPTH CHART

DE	94	A'SHAWN ROBINSON
	93	MARQUISE COPELAND
NT	91	GREG GAINES
	95	BOBBY BROWN III
DT	99	AARON DONALD
	96	MICHAEL HOECHT
OLB	40	VON MILLER
	58	JUSTIN HOLLINS
OLB	54	LEONARD FLOYD
	45	OGBONNIA OKORONKWO
ILB	51	TROY REEDER
	39	ANTOINE BROOKS JR.
ILB	32	TRAVIN HOWARD
	56	CHRISTIAN ROZEBOOM
LCB	11	DARIOUS WILLIAMS
	21	DONT'E DEAYON
RCB	5	JALEN RAMSEY
	22	DAVID LONG JR.
SS	33	NICK SCOTT
FS	24	TAYLOR RAPP
	26	TERRELL BURGESS

SPECIALISTS DEPTH CHART

P	6	JOHNNY HEKKER
K	8	MATT GAY
H	6	JOHNNY HEKKER
LS	42	MATT ORZECH
PR	19	BRANDON POWELL
	10	COOPER KUPP
KR	19	BRANDON POWELL
	18	BEN SKOWRONEK

NUMERICAL ROSTER

3	ODELL BECKHAM JR.	WR
5	JALEN RAMSEY	CB
6	JOHNNY HEKKER	P
8	MATT GAY	K
9	MATTHEW STAFFORD	QB
10	COOPER KUPP	WR
11	DARIOUS WILLIAMS	CB
12	VAN JEFFERSON	WR
13	JOHN WOLFORD	QB
16	BRYCE PERKINS	QB
18	BEN SKOWRONEK	WR
19	BRANDON POWELL	WR
21	DONT'E DEAYON	CB
22	DAVID LONG JR.	CB
23	CAM AKERS	RB
24	TAYLOR RAPP	S
25	SONY MICHEL	RB
26	TERRELL BURGESS	S
32	TRAVIN HOWARD	ILB
33	NICK SCOTT	S
34	JAKE FUNK	RB
38	BUDDY HOWELL	RB
39	ANTOINE BROOKS JR.	LB
40	VON MILLER	OLB
42	MATT ORZECH	LS
43	JAKE GERVASE	S
45	OGBONNIA OKORONKWO	OLB
46	GRANT HALEY	DB
48	CHRIS GARRETT	OLB
51	TROY REEDER	ILB
52	TERRELL LEWIS	OLB
54	LEONARD FLOYD	OLB
55	BRIAN ALLEN	OL
56	CHRISTIAN ROZEBOOM	LB
58	JUSTIN HOLLINS	LB
63	AUSTIN CORBETT	OL
65	COLEMAN SHELTON	OL
68	ALARIC JACKSON	OL
70	JOE NOTEBOOM	OL
71	BOBBY EVANS	OL
72	TREMAYNE ANCHRUM JR.	OL
73	DAVID EDWARDS	OL
77	ANDREW WHITWORTH	OL
79	ROB HAVENSTEIN	OL
86	KENDALL BLANTON	TE
88	BRYCEN HOPKINS	TE
89	TYLER HIGBEE	TE
91	GREG GAINES	DL
93	MARQUISE COPELAND	DL
94	A'SHAWN ROBINSON	DL
95	BOBBY BROWN III	DL
96	MICHAEL HOECHT	DL
99	AARON DONALD	DL

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IN MEMORIAM

JOHN MADDEN

1936-2021

CINCINNATI BENGALS
STATS/ROSTER/LINEUPS

NUMERICAL ROSTER

1	JA'MARR CHASE	WR
2	EVAN McPHERSON	K
8	BRANDON ALLEN	QB
9	JOE BURROW	QB
10	KEVIN HUBER	P
16	TRENTON IRWIN	WR
17	STANLEY MORGAN	WR
20	ELI APPLE	CB
21	MIKE HILTON	CB
22	CHIDOBE AWUZIE	CB
24	VONN BELL	S
25	CHRIS EVANS	HB
26	TRAE WAYNES	CB
28	JOE MIXON	HB
29	VERNON HARGREAVES III	CB
30	JESSIE BATES III	S
31	MICHAEL J. THOMAS	S
32	TRAYVEON WILLIAMS	HB
33	TRE FLOWERS	CB
34	SAMAJE PERINE	HB
35	JALEN DAVIS	CB
37	RICARDO ALLEN	S
44	CLAY JOHNSTON	LB
46	CLARK HARRIS	LS
47	KEANDRE JONES	LB
51	MARKUS BAILEY	LB
55	LOGAN WILSON	LB
57	GERMAINE PRATT	LB
63	TREY HILL	C
66	TREY HOPKINS	C
67	QUINTON SPAIN	G
68	JOSH TUPOU	DT
69	ZACH KERR	DT
70	D'ANTE SMITH	OT
73	JONAH WILLIAMS	OT
74	FRED JOHNSON	OT
75	ISAIAH PRINCE	OT
77	HAKEEM ADENIJI	G
79	JACKSON CARMAN	G
80	MIKE D. THOMAS	WR
83	TYLER BOYD	WR
84	MITCHELL WILCOX	TE
85	TEE HIGGINS	WR
87	C.J. UZOMAH	TE
89	DREW SAMPLE	TE
90	KHALID KAREEM	DE
91	TREY HENDRICKSON	DE
92	B.J. HILL	DT
93	WYATT RAY	DE
94	SAM HUBBARD	DE
96	CAM SAMPLE	DE
98	D.J. READER	DT
99	TYLER SHELVIN	DT

STATISTICAL LEADERS

PASSING	COMP-ATT	PCT	YDS	TD	INT	RTNG
JOE BURROW	366-520	70.4	4611	34	14	108.3
BRANDON ALLEN	17-34	50.0	149	2	0	81.6

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
JOE MIXON	292	1205	4.1	32	13
SAMAJE PERINE	55	246	4.5	46	1

RECEIVING	NO	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
JA'MARR CHASE	81	1455	18.0	82	13
TEE HIGGINS	74	1091	14.7	54	6
TYLER BOYD	67	828	12.4	68	5
C.J. UZOMAH	49	493	10.1	55	5
JOE MIXON	42	314	7.5	52	3
SAMAJE PERINE	27	196	7.3	23	1

DEFENSE	TACKLES	ASSISTS	TOTAL	SACKS	PD	FF
LOGAN WILSON	55	43	98	1.0	4	1
VONN BELL	64	33	97	0.5	8	3
JESSIE BATES III	67	21	88	0.0	4	0
GERMAINE PRATT	55	33	88	0.5	2	2
MIKE HILTON	48	18	66	0.0	5	1
CHIDOBE AWUZIE	53	11	64	0.0	14	0
SAM HUBBARD	33	29	62	7.5	3	1
B.J. HILL	29	21	50	5.5	0	0

INTERCEPTIONS	NO	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
LOGAN WILSON	4	31	7.8	18	0

Eli Apple, Chidobe Awuzie, and Mike Hilton each with 2 interceptions

KICK RETURNS	RET	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
TRENT TAYLOR	4	68	17.0	25	0

PUNT RETURNS	RET	FC	AVG	LONG	TD
TRENT TAYLOR	7	5	7.4	12	0

PUNTING	NO	AVG	NET	TCHBK	IN/20	LONG
KEVIN HUBER	66	46.4	41.0	6	22	61

FIELD GOALS	TOTAL	1-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50+
EVAN McPHERSON	28/33	0/0	5/5	8/8	6/9	9/11

OFFENSIVE DEPTH CHART

WR	1	JA'MARR CHASE
	16	TRENTON IRWIN
LT	73	JONAH WILLIAMS
	70	D'ANTE SMITH
LG	67	QUINTON SPAIN
	79	JACKSON CARMAN
C	66	TREY HOPKINS
	63	TREY HILL
RG	77	HAKEEM ADENIJI
	79	JACKSON CARMAN
RT	75	ISAIAH PRINCE
	74	FRED JOHNSON
TE	87	C.J. UZOMAH
	89	DREW SAMPLE
WR	83	TYLER BOYD
	17	STANLEY MORGAN
WR	85	TEE HIGGINS
	80	MIKE D. THOMAS
QB	9	JOE BURROW
	8	BRANDON ALLEN
HB	28	JOE MIXON
	34	SAMAJE PERINE

DEFENSIVE DEPTH CHART

LDE	94	SAM HUBBARD
	96	CAM SAMPLE
NT	98	D.J. READER
	68	JOSH TUPOU
DT	92	B.J. HILL
	99	TYLER SHELVIN
RDE	91	TREY HENDRICKSON
	90	KHALID KAREEM
LB	55	LOGAN WILSON
	44	CLAY JOHNSTON
LB	57	GERMAINE PRATT
	51	MARKUS BAILEY
NCB	21	MIKE HILTON
	35	JALEN DAVIS
CB	20	ELI APPLE
	33	TRE FLOWERS
CB	22	CHIDOBE AWUZIE
	26	TRAE WAYNES
S	24	VONN BELL
	31	MICHAEL J. THOMAS
S	30	JESSIE BATES III
	37	RICARDO ALLEN

SPECIALISTS DEPTH CHART

P	10	KEVIN HUBER
K	2	EVAN McPHERSON
H	10	KEVIN HUBER
LS	46	CLARK HARRIS
PR	83	TYLER BOYD
	16	TRENTON IRWIN
KR	25	CHRIS EVANS
	32	TRAYVEON WILLIAMS

BIG CATS ARE ON THE PROWL

BY MICHAEL PRESTON

NOTHING BETTER EXEMPLIFIES THE Bengals' appreciation of their city's Super Bowl dream than head coach Zac Taylor stopping off at several local establishments to personally deliver game balls to fans after the team's first playoff win in 31 years.

If the Bengals can pull off a victory in Super Bowl LVI, his next trip around town might come with the Lombardi Trophy in tow.

What was at times an up-and-down – but never dull – journey through the 2021 season has taken off over the past several weeks, bringing Cincinnati to the brink of pro football supremacy.

Through 13 games, the Bengals stood at 7-6, and while they were in the thick of the AFC playoff hunt, a bid was far from a sure thing.

But then Taylor loosened the reins on his rising-star quarterback, Joe Burrow, sending the offense into overdrive, while the defense became more confident and began delivering big plays when the team needed them most.

Who Dey Nation has been waiting 33 years for its charges to recapture the magic of the AFC championship team led by QB Boomer Esiason. This time, though, Bengals fans envision a different outcome. In Super Bowl XXIII, their hearts were broken when Joe Montana led the 49ers on an 11-play, 92-yard touchdown drive to wipe out a 16-13 Cincinnati lead in the game's final minute.

As recently as 2019, any thoughts of a return to the Super Bowl would have seemed far-fetched. Taylor's first season at the helm began ominously with an 0-11 mark, but the team's eventual 2-14 finish secured the first overall draft pick and brought about the arrival of the Heisman Trophy-winning Burrow.

In that same draft, they plucked Clemson wide receiver Tee Higgins with the first pick of the second round. Last April, with the fifth overall selection, they targeted Ja'Marr Chase,

Joe Burrow has shown maturity beyond his years while bringing the Bengals to their first Super Bowl since the 1988 season.

Emilee Chinn/AP Images

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Tee Higgins is part of the Bengals' stellar wide-receiver trio – along with Ja'Marr Chase and Tyler Boyd – that combined for 222 receptions and 24 touchdown catches during the regular season. Defensive tackle D.J. Reader is a certified run-stuffer who contributed 43 tackles in 2021, helping the Bengals rank among the league's top rushing defenses.

the explosive wideout from LSU. Pretty soon, the Bengals were off and, err, passing.

By Week 7, they had already eclipsed the previous year's win total (4) and from there went on to capture the AFC North crown with a 10-7 record. The Bengals went from worst to first to claim the No. 4 seed in the AFC while truly embracing the mantra, "Why Not Us?"

Taylor, just 5 years old the last time the Bengals played in a Super Bowl, has dutifully recruited veterans the past two off-seasons to instill a different mentality that has forged this Bengals team.

"We've got a lot of guys who have come from winning cultures that understand [what it takes to win], and it rubs off on everybody," says Taylor. "And there's plenty of guys here who haven't necessarily been in playoff games, but that's not to discount what they've done for us. They're here for a reason."

OFFENSE

Of course, the most prominent new faces of the franchise since Taylor began his rebuild are the explosive quarterback-receiver tandem of Burrow and Chase. The duo, who tore their way to a national championship together during LSU's record-setting 15-0 season in 2019, needed little time to reestablish a rapport that thrust Chase into NFL Offensive Rookie of the Year contention as well as earning him a Pro Bowl honor.

Burrow's 70.4 completion percentage led the NFL, and his hand has become only hotter since being fully unleashed. In a late-season four-week stretch that locked up the division crown, he threw for 1,476 yards, 11 TDs, and no interceptions. The most notable of those performances came in a 41-21 hammering of the Ravens in Week 16, when he gun-slinged his way to 525 passing yards – the fourth-most in a game in NFL history – with four touchdowns.

Overall, Burrow threw for a team-record 4,611 yards, generating 34 TDs against 14 interceptions. That equated to a 108.3 passer rating, second only to Green Bay's Aaron Rodgers. Burrow manages to temper an aggressive style to produce accuracy while being quick and decisive in the pocket, and he's made a wise habit out of targeting former collegiate teammate Chase.

"There's only a couple of guys like him in the league speed-wise, but I think what really makes him special is his ability to break tackles," Burrow says of Chase. "Guys like that are tough to come by."

2021 RESULTS

CINCINNATI BENGALS (13-7)

9/12	MINNESOTA	(OT) 27-24	W
9/19	Chicago	17-20	L
9/26	Pittsburgh	24-10	W
9/30	JACKSONVILLE	24-21	W
10/10	GREEN BAY	(OT) 22-25	L
10/17	Detroit	34-11	W
10/24	Baltimore	41-17	W
10/31	N.Y. Jets	31-34	L
11/7	CLEVELAND	16-41	L
11/21	Las Vegas	32-13	W
11/28	PITTSBURGH	41-10	W
12/5	L.A. CHARGERS	22-41	L
12/12	SAN FRAN.	(OT) 23-26	L
12/19	Denver	15-10	W
12/26	BALTIMORE	41-21	W
1/2	KANSAS CITY	34-31	W
1/9	Cleveland	16-21	L
AFC Playoffs			
1/15	LAS VEGAS	26-19	W
1/22	Tennessee	19-16	W
1/30	Kansas City	(OT) 27-24	W

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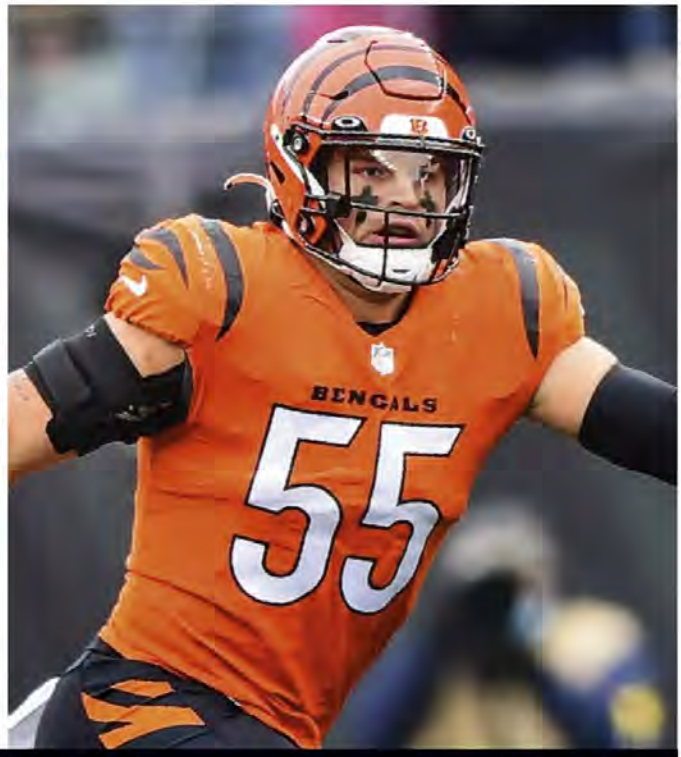

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Tyler Boyd provides another headache for opposing defenses. He had TD catches in each of his final three regular-season games and one in the Bengals' Wild Card win over Las Vegas.
Logan Wilson led Cincinnati in tackles (98) and interceptions (4), and picked off the pass that set up the game-winning field goal against Tennessee in the Divisional playoffs.

Chase generated a new yardage high for output by a rookie receiver in the Super Bowl era and also led the AFC in receiving yards (1,455) while reeling in 81 passes and 13 touchdowns.

Beyond big numbers, Chase is looking like the man for big occasions. He caught a game-changing 82-yard touchdown in a pivotal Week 7 win over the Ravens and, when the Bengals' grip on the AFC North title had loosened, produced a monster 266 yards (an NFL rookie record by the way) and three touchdowns in a 34-31 dogfight with the Chiefs. In the dying seconds of the Divisional round of the playoffs, it was Chase's crucial 19-yard grab that put the Bengals into range for Evan McPherson to kick the game-winning field goal.

"I'm really glad that he plays receiver for us," says Taylor. "What he's done as a rookie has been tremendous."

The Bengals come at defenses from all angles, boasting a potent triple threat out wide. The combined output of Chase and Higgins made them the youngest pair of 1,000-yard receivers in NFL history; now in his second year, Higgins weighed in with

BENGALS FOUNDED BY A TOWERING FIGURE

Harvey Eugene Smith/AP Images

With this year's Super Bowl appearance, the Bengals are aiming to join the list of teams to win a Super Bowl title. It would be the ultimate tribute to the legacy of their founder, one of the greatest winners in the game's history.

The Bengals came into being in 1968 as an expansion team in the American Football League, the culmination of the efforts of **Paul Brown**, who had co-founded the Cleveland Browns two decades earlier and coached them to seven championships – four in the All-America Football Conference and three in the NFL – before leaving in 1962.

After a short hiatus, Brown was eager to return to the game, and in 1965, he started putting plans together for another pro football team in Ohio. Three years later, that plan became reality.

In addition to being the team's owner and president, Brown was the coach for the Bengals' first eight seasons. In 1970, in just their third year of existence, they won the AFC Central Division title. He would lead them to two more playoff appearances, including in 1975, when they went 11-3. By then, the team's quarterback was Ken Anderson, who became a pillar of the franchise and was on the first Bengals team to reach the Super Bowl (XVI).

"He was certainly one of the key figures in professional sports," said Anderson of his former coach. "Football would not be what it is without him. He was always concerned about his guys after football. Football was just a stepping stone. He wanted you to prepare for your life's work."

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1,091 yards and six touchdowns. Add in Tyler Boyd's 828 yards and five touchdowns, and tight end C.J. Uzomah's 493 yards and five scores, and Burrow has quite the arsenal at his disposal.

A running game that ranked outside the top 20 in Taylor's first two seasons needed to improve to balance the Bengals' offensive assault and complement the formidable passing attack. That required further integrating Joe Mixon, who duly responded by earning his first Pro Bowl selection while garnering the third-most rushing yards in the NFL. He racked up a career-high 1,205 yards on the ground and found the end zone 16 times overall, including three through the air.

"He's a downhill runner," says offensive line coach Frank Pollack. "He's explosive and he's at his pure best when he's heading on some sort of downhill angle."

About the only concern in the Bengals' offensive armor has been protecting Burrow, who was sacked 51 times during the regular season and 11 more in the team's first two playoff games. Yet for the Bengals to rank seventh in the NFL in scoring (27.1 points per game) and passing yards (282.7 yards per game), the front group must be doing a lot right.

"I'm not worried about the sack stat," says Burrow. "It is what it is. There's a lot of different things that go into that."

Tackle Jonah Williams was the 11th overall draft pick in 2019 and lines up beside two veterans in left guard Quinton Spain and center Trey Hopkins. It was Williams and Spain who paved the way for Mixon to earn the Bengals a crucial touchdown in the Divisional round on a 16-yard cutback run. The line also includes powerful right tackle Isaiah Prince and Hakeem Adeniji, the team's fourth starting right guard this season.

DEFENSE

Significant weight was put behind the philosophy that the Bengals would benefit from exploring free agency to sign experienced players with a winning mentality when it came to bolstering the defensive side of the ball. Coordinator Lou Anarumo's new charges blended in perfectly and the Cincinnati defense ranked fifth against the run in 2021, allowing only 102.5 yards per game. One of the

Emilee Chinn/AP Images

Free safety Jessie Bates III is an outstanding tackler – his 88 stops ranked third on the team – and gave the Bengals an early lift in their playoff win over the Titans, intercepting a pass on the game's first play from scrimmage.

CINCINNATI BENGALS ALL-TIME PLAYOFF RESULTS

(8 wins, 14 losses)

Year	Round	Opponent	Score	W/L
1970	AFC Divisional	at Baltimore Colts	0-17	L
1973	AFC Divisional	at Miami	16-34	L
1975	AFC Divisional	at Oakland Raiders	28-31	L
1981	AFC Divisional	Buffalo	28-21	W
	AFC Championship	San Diego Chargers	27-7	W
	Super Bowl XVI	**San Francisco**	**21-26**	**L**
1982	AFC First Round Playoff	N.Y. Jets	17-44	L
1988	AFC Divisional	Seattle	21-13	W
	AFC Championship	Buffalo	21-10	W
	Super Bowl XXIII	**San Francisco**	**16-20**	**L**
1990	AFC Wild Card	Houston Oilers	41-14	W
	AFC Divisional	at L.A Raiders	10-20	L
2005	AFC Wild Card	Pittsburgh	17-31	L
2009	AFC Wild Card	N.Y. Jets	14-24	L
2011	AFC Wild Card	at Houston	10-31	L
2012	AFC Wild Card	at Houston	13-19	L
2013	AFC Wild Card	San Diego Chargers	10-27	L
2014	AFC Wild Card	at Indianapolis	10-26	L
2015	AFC Wild Card	Pittsburgh	16-18	L
2021	AFC Wild Card	Las Vegas	26-19	W
	AFC Divisional	at Tennessee	19-16	W
	AFC Championship	at Kansas City	27-24 (OT)	W

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secrets to their success has been a moving-parts strategy that rarely deploys the same style two games in a row.

"As long as the technique is the same, you can add to the flexibility of the defense," explains Anarumo. "You have to do that to keep people off balance. Each game plan will be different for various reasons, and that's how we do it."

Fifth-year corner Chidobe Awuzie, who arrived from Dallas in the off-season, admitted: "I haven't been on a defense where we have this many looks. We have 11 guys who can do it. [Anarumo] gives us a lot of trust, not just as players, but as professionals. He gives us the keys, and he trusts you."

Chief among the incoming success stories is defensive end Trey Hendrickson, who arrived after a dominant season with the Saints and became one of three Bengals to earn a Pro Bowl selection. He put up career numbers with 14 sacks, along with 27 quarterback hits and three forced fumbles. Hendrickson set a franchise-best mark with 11 consecutive games with at least a half-sack, just one shy of the NFL record held by the Chiefs' Chris Jones.

Operating on the right side of the line, Cincinnati native Sam Hubbard signed an off-season contract extension and highlighted a fourth year with his hometown club with 7.5 sacks. Defensive tackle Larry Ogunjobi joined from Cleveland, but was placed on injured reserve after sustaining a foot injury during the Wild Card win, leaving a huge hole on the defensive front. Continuing the influx, fourth-year tackle B.J. Hill arrived via a trade with the New York Giants.

Speedy Mike Hilton, formerly with the Steelers, settled in at nickel back and fittingly produced his first career pick-six in a 41-10 triumph over his former team. Come the playoffs, his timely tip and interception of Ryan Tannehill on a slot blitz silenced a ferocious home crowd in Tennessee as the Titans were knocking on the door of the end zone.

Logan Wilson led the team with 98 tackles and four interceptions within Anarumo's morphing defense, just ahead of fellow linebacker Germaine Pratt and safeties Vonn Bell and Jessie Bates III. Wilson produced the pivotal interception in the final minute of the Divisional Playoff win at Tennessee, which

AFC CHAMPIONSHIP GAME

Cincinnati 27, KANSAS CITY 24 (OT)

In the midst of one of the biggest turnaround seasons ever seen in the NFL, the Bengals executed a huge reversal in the AFC Championship Game to stun the Chiefs in overtime and advance to the Super Bowl for the first time in 33 years.

Kansas City won the overtime toss and took the ball, but on the third play from scrimmage the Bengals' Jessie Bates III tipped a deep pass that ended up in the arms of teammate Vonn Bell. Starting from his own 45-yard line, Bengals QB Joe Burrow directed a nine-play drive that ended with Evan McPherson's game-winning 31-yard field goal.

GEHA FIELD AT ARROWHEAD STADIUM
Kansas City, Mo. **Jan. 30, 2022**

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	OT	F
Cincinnati	3	7	11	3	3	27
Kansas City	7	14	0	3	0	24

1st Quarter

KC Hill 10 pass from Mahomes (Butker kick), 7:25
CIN McPherson 32 FG, 0:40

2nd Quarter

KC Kelce 5 pass from Mahomes (Butker kick), 12:23
KC Hardman 3 pass from Mahomes (Butker kick), 5:09
CIN Perine 41 pass from Burrow (McPherson kick), 1:15

3rd Quarter

CIN McPherson 31 FG, 3:02
CIN Chase 2 pass from Burrow (Taylor pass from Burrow), 0:18

4th Quarter

CIN McPherson 52 FG, 6:07
KC Butker 44 FG, 0:03

Overtime

CIN McPherson 31 FG, 9:26

It continues an amazing change of fortune for a team that won only four games a year ago and trailed the Chiefs 21-3 midway through the second quarter.

But momentum began to swing shortly thereafter. After Samaje Perine's 41-yard catch-and-run TD cut the deficit to 21-10, the Bengals' defense made a goal-line stand, getting a touchdown-saving tackle from Eli Apple at the 1-yard line on the final play before intermission.

The Bengals then repeatedly stymied the Chiefs' offense in the second half, allowing just 83 yards the rest of the game. McPherson kicked a 31-yard field goal near the end of the third quarter to draw the visitors closer, and B.J. Hill's interception on the Chiefs' next possession set up the Bengals again. Burrow cashed in with a 2-yard touchdown pass to Ja'Marr Chase that he followed with a two-point conversion throw to Trent Taylor that tied the game at 21-21.

McPherson's 52-yard field goal put the Bengals ahead with 6:07 remaining, but the Chiefs drained the rest of the fourth-quarter clock and were as close as 1st-and-goal at the 5-yard line before the Bengals held, the big play being a sack by Sam Hubbard that moved the ball back to the 26. K.C. had to settle for Harrison Butker's game-tying 44-yard field goal.

After Bell's interception, the Bengals used two Burrow-to-Tee Higgins completions and five Joe Mixon runs, including a 13-yard pick-up to get deep into Chiefs territory for McPherson's clutch game-winning kick.

Burrow completed 23 of 38 passes on the day for 250 yards. Chase and Higgins each had six catches; Logan Wilson led the Bengals' defense with 10 tackles.

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led to a swift march downfield and the game-winning field goal. Minutes earlier, Wilson had stopped running back Derrick Henry for a loss on a fourth-and-1 run that kept the game tied. Also as part of the win, Bates made headlines with an interception on the Titans' first play from scrimmage, while defensive tackle D.J. Reader twice dropped Henry for a loss.

Cornerback Eli Apple has come in and shown glimpses of the college form that led the Giants to take him 10th overall in the 2016 draft, including a tip that was key to Wilson's playoff pick. Apple produced interceptions in back-to-back regular-season games against the Raiders and Steelers.

Corner Tre Flowers joined the secondary mid-season, claimed off waivers after his release from the Seahawks. A highlight of his contributions came in that statement win over the Ravens when he clamped down on receiving threat Mark Andrews, limiting the tight end to 48 yards on three catches. Flowers also kept talented Raiders TE Darren Waller in check in the Wild Card round.

The Bengals' 31-year postseason victory drought ended in the hands of Pratt. A third-round pick from Taylor's inaugural 2019 draft, he intercepted Derek Carr near the goal line with 17 seconds to go, stopping the Raiders' bid to tie the Wild Card game.

And then there's Bell, who snared the overtime interception of Patrick Mahomes in the AFC Championship Game to spur the Bengals to victory.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Evan McPherson, the only kicker selected in the 2021 NFL Draft, has delivered in the clutch all season, his game-winning 52-yard field goal at Tennessee just another example.

"He's got ice in his veins," Taylor says. "There's not much more to be said. He's just as cool as it gets."

As part of a record-breaking rookie year, McPherson set team highs for the most field goals from beyond 50 yards (9) and also had the longest kick in franchise history, a 58-yarder. He went 4-for-4 in the playoff win over Tennessee, including two beyond 50 yards. Adding in his performance from the Wild Card round, McPherson became the first player in NFL history to make four-or-more field goals in multiple playoff games in a single season.

For good measure, he made four more in the conference championship game vs. the Chiefs, the last of those a 31-yarder to send the Bengals to the Super Bowl.

Two players who joined the Bengals in 2009 remain key members of the special teams. Punter Kevin Huber, a fifth-round pick that year, averaged 46.4 yards per punt this season and works smoothly with long snapper Clark Harris, who was signed as a free agent in October 2009.

GAME PLAN

The Bengals' resilience has brought them all the way to the Super Bowl, and much of that mojo flows from the right arm and persona of Joe Burrow. His deep accuracy can deflate a defense (he threw 15 TD passes of 30-plus yards during the regular season) and even after being knocked down, he remains undeterred.

Ja'Marr Chase is the obvious name when pinpointing Burrow's most likely target. He is virtually unplayable on back-shoulder throws, is an explosive runner after the catch, and is effective in multiple looks. Yet when considering the Bengals' formula for success on Super Bowl Sunday, the prolific Tee Higgins, Tyler Boyd, and Joe Mixon all bring unpredictability to the game plan.

Defensively, the Bengals will need to bring a healthy front to maintain the performance that made them one of the league's toughest vs. the run. Against the pass, they've demonstrated throughout the playoffs that they not only can come up with big interceptions, but that they're brutally efficient. Carr managed a 69.2 passer rating; Tannehill's number was just 66.7.

If the Bengals can put it all together in Super Bowl LVI, they'll not only be crowned NFL champions for the first time, they'll be kings in the Queen City.

Michael Preston is a freelance writer and communications consultant based in Providence, R.I. He has worked 21 Super Bowls as a member of the NFL PR staff.

CINCINNATI BENGALS TEAM OFFICIALS

ADMINISTRATION
Mike Brown
President

Katie Blackburn
Executive Vice President

Paul Brown
Vice President – Player Personnel

Troy Blackburn
Vice President

PLAYER PERSONNEL
Duke Tobin
Director of Player Personnel

Mike Potts
Scouting Director (College)

Steven Radicevic
Scouting Director (Pro)

Bill Tobin
Personnel Executive

Trey Brown
Andrew Johnson
Christian Sarkisian
Scouts

FOOTBALL OPERATIONS
Eric Ball
Director of Player Relations

Paul Sparling
Director of Sports Medicine Administration/Head Certified Athletic Trainer

Nick Cosgray
Director of Rehabilitation and Performance/Assistant Certified Athletic Trainer

Dan Willen
Assistant Head Certified Athletic Trainer

Adam Knollman
Equipment Manager

Travis Brammer
Video Director

COACHING OPERATIONS
Doug Rosfeld
Director of Coaching Operations

BUSINESS OPERATIONS
Elizabeth Blackburn
Director of Strategy and Engagement

Jeff Brickner
Director of Operations

Mark Herren
Director of Security

FINANCE
Johanna Kappner
Chief Financial Officer

MARKETING
Brian Sells
Vice President – Chief Marketing Officer

Ryan Holmes
Director of Corporate Partnerships

Caroline Blackburn
Senior Manager of Digital Strategy

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Director of Ticket Operations

Duane Haring
Director of Ticket Sales and Service

MERCHANDISE
Monty Montague
Merchandise Manager

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
Jake Kiser
Senior Director of Technology

Sam Francis
Football Insight Associate

COMMUNICATIONS
Emily Parker
Director of Communications

PJ Combs
Director of Media Relations

Seth Tanner
Director of Content

Wil Blackwell
Senior Manager of Gameday Production

Geoff Hobson
Bengals.com Senior Writer

Marisa Contipelli
Team Reporter/ Video Producer

COMMUNITY
Alex Simons
Director of Community Engagement

TEAM SUPPORT
Marc T. Galloway
Head Team Physician/ Medical Director

Bret Betz
Brian Grawe
Ed Jung
Kevin Reilly
Team Physicians

Charlotte Simons
Cheerleader Coordinator

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ZAC TAYLOR Head Coach

Zac Taylor was named the 10th head coach in Cincinnati Bengals history on Feb. 4, 2019.

This season, Taylor has overseen the rapid development of QB Joe Burrow while leading Cincinnati to a 10-7 regular-season record, the AFC North title, and the franchise's third Super Bowl appearance.

He's guided the Bengals through numerous challenges in his first two seasons — most notably a season-ending knee injury to Burrow in 2020, just months after Cincinnati had selected him with the top pick in the draft.

Taylor spent 2017-18 with the L.A. Rams, where he served on the offensive staff and helped guide the team to a berth in Super Bowl LIII.

Previously, Taylor was offensive coordinator and QBs coach at the University of Cincinnati in 2016, and served on the Miami Dolphins' offensive staff from 2012-15. He began his coaching career as a graduate assistant at Texas A&M from 2008-2011.

A decorated college QB at Nebraska, Taylor won 2006 Big 12 Offensive Player of the Year honors. His father, Sherwood, played and coached collegiately, and his brother, Press, is an offensive assistant with the Colts.

Taylor is a native of Norman, Okla. He and his wife, Sarah, have four children: Brooks, Luke, Emma Claire, and Milly.

ASSISTANT COACHES

Lou Anarumo.....Defensive Coordinator
Colt Anderson.....Assistant Special Teams
Joey Boese.....Strength and Conditioning
Brian Callahan.....Offensive Coordinator
James Casey.....Tight Ends
Louie Cioffi.....Defensive Quality Control
Mark Duffner.....Senior Defensive Assistant
Al Golden.....Linebackers
Justin Hill.....Running Backs
Marion Hobby.....Defensive Line
Todd Hunt.....Assistant Strength and Conditioning
Steve Jackson.....Secondary/Cornerbacks
Jordan Kovacs.....Defensive Quality Control
Brad Kragthorpe.....Assistant Wide Receivers
Robert Livingston....Secondary/Safeties
Ben Martin.....Assistant Offensive Line
Dan Pitcher.....Quarterbacks
Frank Pollack.....Offensive Line/Run Game Coordinator
Darrin Simmons.....Assistant Head Coach/ Special Teams Coordinator
Garrett Swanson.....Assistant Strength and Conditioning
Troy Walters.....Wide Receivers

CINCINNATI BENGALS ALPHABETICAL ROSTER

NO	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	BIRTH DATE	NFL EXP	COLLEGE	HOW ACQUIRED
77	Adeniji, Hakeem	G	6-4	302	12/8/97	2	Kansas	D6 '20
8	Allen, Brandon	QB	6-2	209	9/5/92	5	Arkansas	FA '20
37	Allen, Ricardo	S	5-9	186	12/18/91	7	Purdue	FA '21
20	Apple, Eli	CB	6-1	203	8/9/95	6	Ohio State	FA '21
22	Awuzie, Chidobe	CB	6-0	202	5/24/95	5	Colorado	UFA (Dall.) '21
51	Bailey, Markus	LB	6-0	235	3/7/97	2	Purdue	D7 '20
30	Bates III, Jessie	S	6-1	200	2/26/97	4	Wake Forest	D2 '18
24	Bell, Vonn	S	5-11	205	12/12/94	6	Ohio State	UFA (NO) '20
83	Boyd, Tyler	WR	6-2	203	11/15/94	6	Pittsburgh	D2 '16
9	Burrow, Joe	QB	6-4	221	12/10/96	2	LSU	D1 '20
79	Carman, Jackson	G	6-5	322	1/22/00	R	Clemson	D2 '21
1	Chase, Ja'Marr	WR	6-0	201	3/1/00	R	LSU	D1 '21
35	Davis, Jalen	CB	5-10	185	2/2/96	2	Utah State	FA '20
25	Evans, Chris	HB	5-11	211	10/5/97	R	Michigan	D6b '21
33	Flowers, Tre	CB	6-3	203	6/2/95	4	Oklahoma State	W (Sea.) '21
29	Hargreaves III, Vernon	CB	5-10	204	6/3/95	6	Florida	W (Hou.) '21
46	Harris, Clark	LS	6-5	250	7/10/84	13	Rutgers	FA '09
91	Hendrickson, Trey	DE	6-4	270	12/5/94	5	Florida Atlantic	UFA (NO) '21
85	Higgins, Tee	WR	6-4	216	1/18/99	2	Clemson	D2 '20
92	Hill, B.J.	DT	6-3	311	4/20/95	4	North Carolina State	T (NYG.)'21
63	Hill, Trey	C	6-4	319	1/23/00	R	Georgia	D6a '21
21	Hilton, Mike	CB	5-9	184	3/9/94	5	Mississippi	UFA (Pitt.) '21
66	Hopkins, Trey	C	6-3	316	7/6/92	6	Texas	CFA '14
94	Hubbard, Sam	DE	6-5	265	6/29/95	4	Ohio State	D3a '18
10	Huber, Kevin	P	6-1	210	7/16/85	13	Cincinnati	D5 '09
16	Irwin, Trenton	WR	6-2	207	12/10/95	1	Stanford	FA '19
74	Johnson, Fred	OT	6-6	325	6/5/97	3	Florida	W (Pitt.) '19
44	Johnston, Clay	LB	6-1	232	8/8/96	2	Baylor	W (Car.) '21
47	Jones, Keandre	LB	6-3	220	9/24/97	1	Maryland	FA '20
90	Kareem, Khalid	DE	6-4	268	4/28/98	2	Notre Dame	D5 '20
69	Kerr, Zach	DT	6-2	334	8/29/92	8	Delaware	FA '21
2	McPherson, Evan	K	5-11	185	7/21/99	R	Florida	D5 '21
28	Mixon, Joe	HB	6-1	220	7/24/96	5	Oklahoma	D2 '17
17	Morgan, Stanley	WR	6-0	205	9/7/96	3	Nebraska	CFA '19
34	Perine, Samaje	HB	5-11	240	9/16/95	5	Oklahoma	W (Mia.) '21
57	Pratt, Germaine	LB	6-3	245	5/21/96	3	North Carolina State	D3 '19
75	Prince, Isaiah	OT	6-7	305	7/29/97	2	Ohio State	W (Mia.) '19
93	Ray, Wyatt	DE	6-3	255	10/24/96	2	Boston College	W (Tenn.) '21
98	Reader, D.J.	DT	6-3	347	7/1/94	6	Clemson	UFA (Hou.) '20
96	Sample, Cam	DE	6-3	267	9/20/99	R	Tulane	D4a '21
89	Sample, Drew	TE	6-5	258	4/16/96	3	Washington	D2 '19
99	Shelvin, Tyler	DT	6-2	350	7/22/98	R	LSU	D4b '21
70	Smith, D'Ante	OT	6-5	305	6/9/98	R	East Carolina	D4c '21
67	Spain, Quinton	G	6-4	330	8/7/91	7	West Virginia	FA '20
31	Thomas, Michael J.	S	5-11	195	3/17/90	8	Stanford	FA '21
80	Thomas, Mike D.	WR	6-1	189	8/16/94	6	Southern Mississippi	UFA (LARams) '20
68	Tupou, Josh	DT	6-3	345	5/2/94	4	Colorado	CFA '17
87	Uzomah, C.J.	TE	6-6	260	1/14/93	7	Auburn	D5 '15
26	Waynes, Trae	CB	6-0	190	7/25/92	7	Michigan State	UFA (Minn.) '20
84	Wilcox, Mitchell	TE	6-4	247	11/7/96	1	South Florida	CFA '20
73	Williams, Jonah	OT	6-5	305	11/17/97	3	Alabama	D1 '19
32	Williams, Trayveon	HB	5-8	206	10/18/97	3	Texas A&M	D6a '19
55	Wilson, Logan	LB	6-2	241	7/8/96	2	Wyoming	D3 '20

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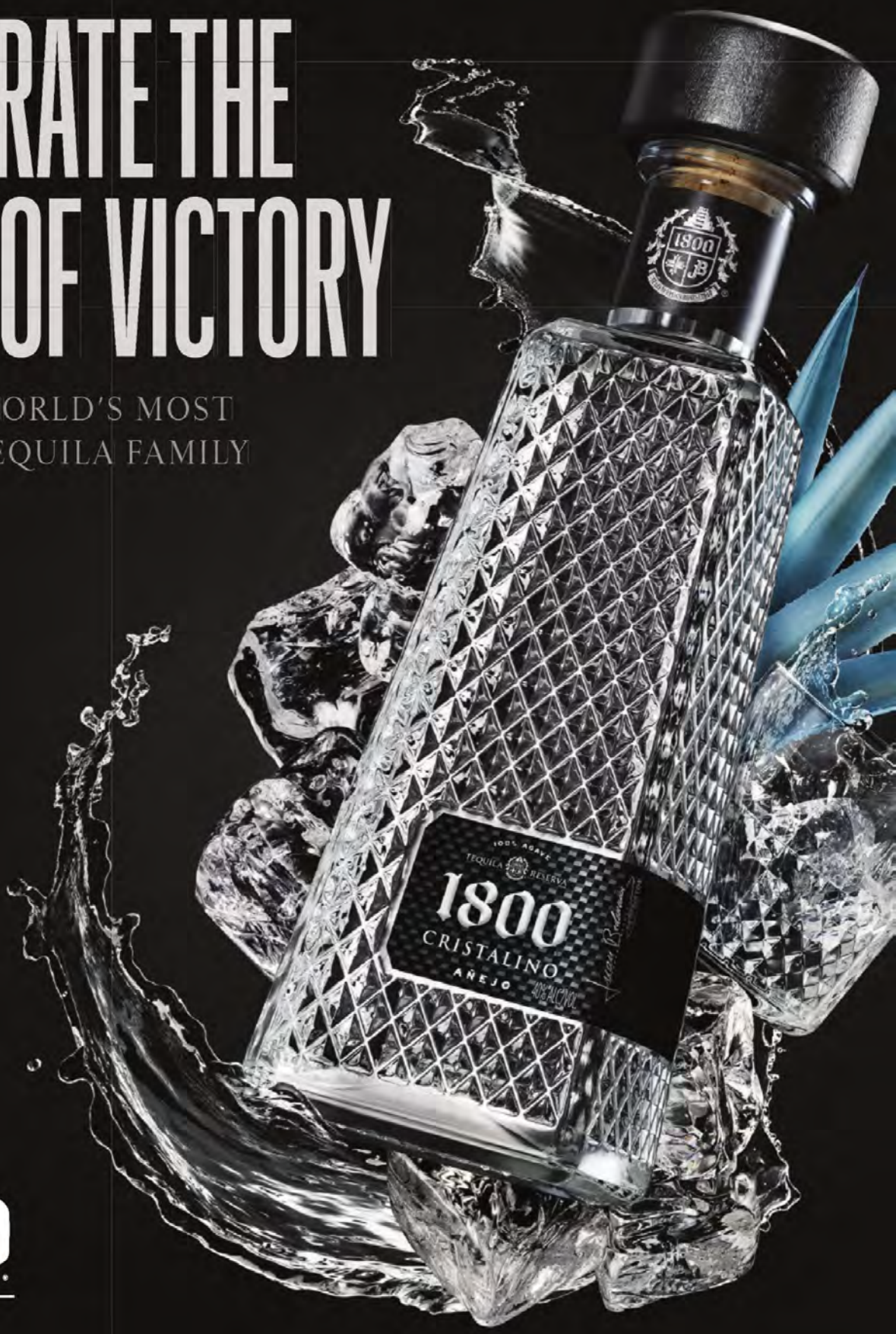

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Hakeem Adeniji (77)
Guard

Brandon Allen (8)
Quarterback

Ricardo Allen (37)
Safety

Eli Apple (20)
Cornerback

Chidobe Awuzie (22)
Cornerback

Markus Bailey (51)
Linebacker

Jessie Bates III (30)
Safety

Vonn Bell (24)
Safety

Tyler Boyd (83)
Wide Receiver

Joe Burrow (9)
Quarterback

Jackson Carman (79)
Guard

Ja'Marr Chase (1)
Wide Receiver

Jalen Davis (35)
Cornerback

Chris Evans (25)
Halfback

Tre Flowers (33)
Cornerback

Vernon Hargreaves III (29)
Cornerback

Clark Harris (46)
Long Snapper

Trey Hendrickson (91)
Defensive End

Tee Higgins (85)
Wide Receiver

B.J. Hill (92)
Defensive Tackle

Trey Hill (63)
Center

Mike Hilton (21)
Cornerback

Trey Hopkins (66)
Center

Sam Hubbard (94)
Defensive End

Kevin Huber (10)
Punter

Trenton Irwin (16)
Wide Receiver

Fred Johnson (74)
Offensive Tackle

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CINCINNATI BENGALS

Clay Johnston (44)
Linebacker

Keandre Jones (47)
Linebacker

Khalid Kareem (90)
Defensive End

Zach Kerr (69)
Defensive Tackle

Evan McPherson (2)
Kicker

Joe Mixon (28)
Halfback

Stanley Morgan (17)
Wide Receiver

Samaje Perine (34)
Halfback

Germaine Pratt (57)
Linebacker

Isaiah Prince (75)
Offensive Tackle

Wyatt Ray (93)
Defensive End

D.J. Reader (98)
Defensive Tackle

Cam Sample (96)
Defensive End

Drew Sample (89)
Tight End

Tyler Shelvin (99)
Defensive Tackle

D'Ante Smith (70)
Offensive Tackle

Quinton Spain (67)
Guard

Michael J. Thomas (31)
Safety

Mike D. Thomas (80)
Wide Receiver

Josh Tupou (68)
Defensive Tackle

C.J. Uzomah (87)
Tight End

Trae Waynes (26)
Cornerback

Mitchell Wilcox (84)
Tight End

Jonah Williams (73)
Offensive Tackle

Trayveon Williams (32)
Halfback

Logan Wilson (55)
Linebacker

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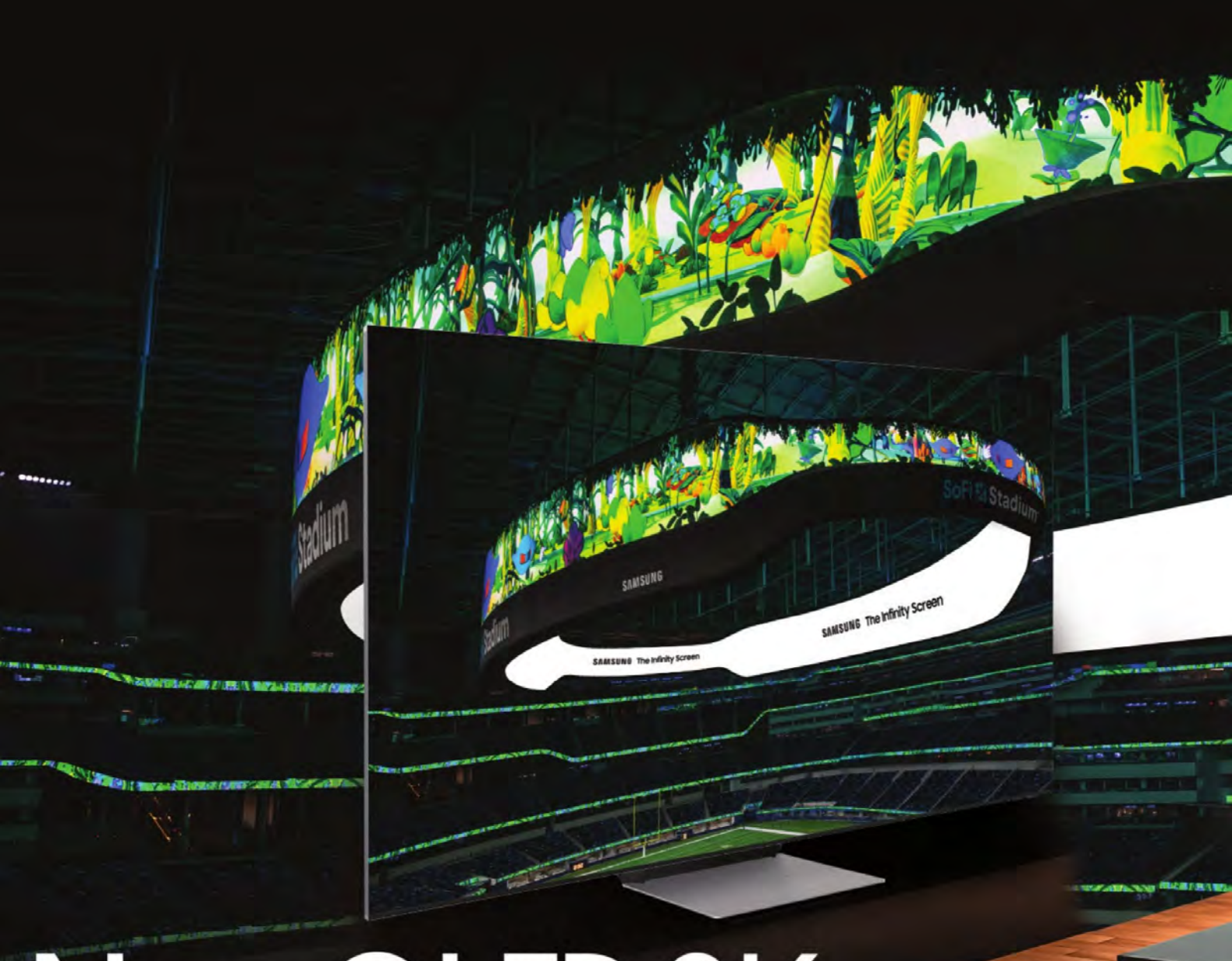

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LIGHTS CAMERA ACTION

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WELCOME
TO LOS ANGELES

On behalf of the Los Angeles Super Bowl Host Committee, we are thrilled to welcome you to Los Angeles County for Super Bowl LVI. This marks a momentous chapter for our community, as the nation's highest-profile sporting event returns to the area for the first time in nearly three decades.

Hosting L.A.'s eighth Super Bowl is the culmination of big dreams, collaboration, and lots of hard work. We are excited to deliver a first-class experience for fans and visitors, and to add to L.A.'s mantle as the world's entertainment and tourism capital.

As you explore our iconic destinations – including the new state-of-the-art SoFi Stadium – we hope you also will enjoy our world-class restaurants, hotels, and other local businesses.

In an unprecedented year, the Los Angeles region has come together in remarkable ways. In tandem with the LA84 Foundation, Play Equity Fund, and National Football League (NFL) Foundation, the Los Angeles Super Bowl Host Committee last summer honored 56 Champion organizations that are doing tremendous work across the Los Angeles region as part of the Super Bowl LVI Legacy Program. The Super Bowl LVI Business Connect program has supported 225 regional minority, women, LGBTQ+, and veteran-owned businesses through professional development, networking, and contract opportunities.

These change-makers represent the very best of what our city has to offer, and we have been thrilled to help them be part of the Super Bowl's far-reaching economic and philanthropic legacy.

As L.A. continues to emerge from a challenging period, we recognize that the Super Bowl represents hope, strength, and perseverance – and we're proud to showcase and celebrate that recovery right here with you.

Thank you for choosing to visit Los Angeles, and we hope to see you back here soon!

Casey Wasserman
Chairman,
Los Angeles Super Bowl Host Committee

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HOST OF SUPER BOWL LVI
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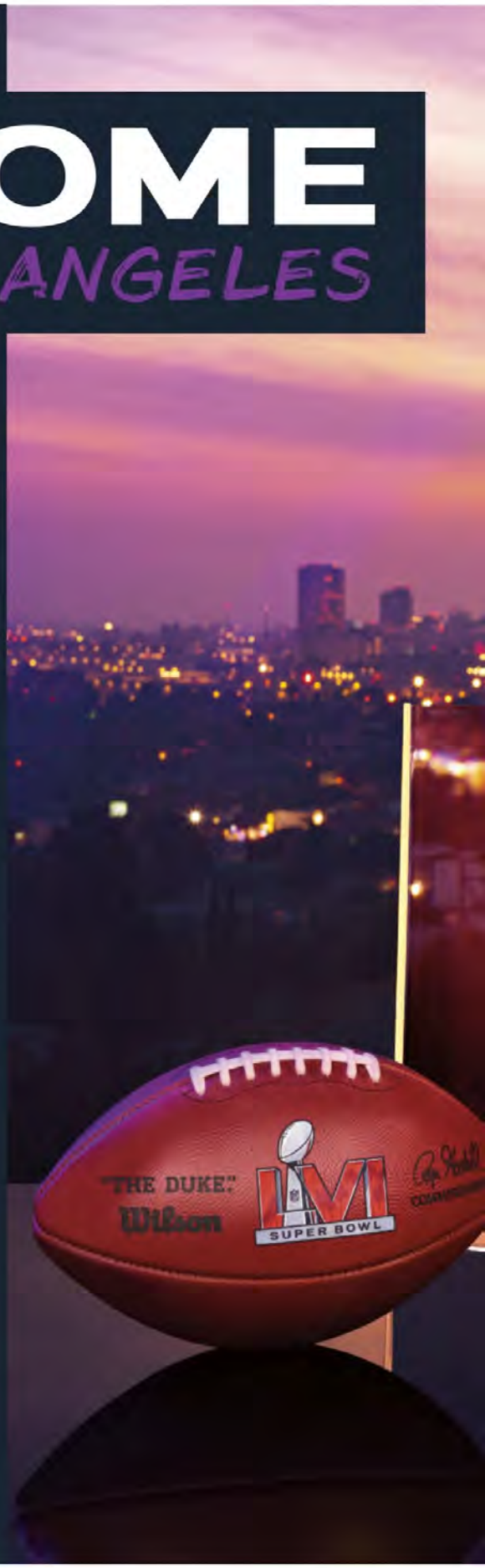

“THE LOS ANGELES SUPER BOWL HOST COMMITTEE IS PROUD TO HELP DELIVER AN EVENT THAT CREATES THOUSANDS OF JOBS, BOOSTS LOCAL BUSINESSES, AND DELIVERS NEW INVESTMENT TO THE REGION.”

Photos courtesy of Los Angeles Super Bowl Host Committee

Bringing out the best of Los Angeles

LOS ANGELES. It's the world's entertainment capital, home to Hollywood and a rich history of grand ambition. It's a proving ground for visionaries unafraid to push boundaries in pursuit of their dreams. By that measure, it's only fitting Los Angeles would again host one of the nation's premier sports entertainment events.

As Los Angeles County welcomes the Super Bowl for the eighth time, this storied event takes on a more profound tenor than in years past. For a region bouncing back from the economic hardship of the pandemic, the Super Bowl delivers an opportunity for Angelenos to show their resolve. Together, the L.A. region is persevering and demonstrating why it's one of the greatest cities in the world: because of the inspired, distinctive communities that make it shine. Super Bowl LVI puts these remarkable Angelenos in an even brighter, enduring spotlight.

In partnership with the NFL, the Los Angeles Super Bowl Host Committee has worked to make a lasting, transformative impact on the L.A. region through philanthropic and community service programs and economic benefits. In short, we have made great progress in recent months championing L.A.

It started with the **Super Bowl LVI Business Connect program,** which is supporting 225 regional minority, women, LGBTQ+, and veteran-owned businesses through professional development, networking, and contract opportunities. For an Angeleno like Jeanette Bolden, the program provided resources and new connections to help her family's 60-year-old pie shop, 27th Street Bakery, flourish.

Last June, the **Super Bowl LVI Legacy Program** – *Champions Live Here* – recognized 56 "unsung hero" grassroots organizations through grant assistance and other support for making a transformative impact in their communities. Over the past eight months, we have showcased these unsung heroes by harnessing the spotlight of the Super Bowl's long-awaited return to the region. Each organization – whose work touches all of the county's 88 cities – received a $10,000 grant, professionally produced marketing video, and public recognition of their work. Six of these organizations received a total grant award of $50,000 to make an even bigger impact in their community.

Most recently, the **NFL Teammate Program** recruited for thousands of local support jobs throughout L.A. County for the week of Super Bowl LVI, marking an essential step in helping the region realize the full economic benefits of the high-profile event.

At the start of this process, our vision was to deliver an experience that is not just great for sports fans but for all Angelenos. The Los Angeles Super Bowl Host Committee has worked with its partners to create jobs, boost local businesses, and to remind the world why stars shine brightest in L.A.

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Super Bowl Experience Presented by Lowe's

SUPER BOWL EXPERIENCE PRESENTED BY LOWE'S – the NFL's interactive football theme park – takes place at the Los Angeles Convention Center on Feb. 5-6 and Feb. 10-12.

To celebrate the conclusion of the NFL's biggest season ever, Super Bowl Experience offers fans the opportunity to collect autographs from current NFL players and Legends, participate in interactive games and youth football clinics, and shop merchandise from NFL Shop presented by Visa.

Super Bowl Experience also features photos with the Vince Lombardi Trophy, a 40-yard dash against NFL players on LED screens, and a Super Bowl rings display showcasing all 55 Super Bowl rings.

Tickets start at $20, and kids 12-and-under can attend free every day. For more information and a complete schedule of events for Super Bowl Experience, visit **superbowl.com** and download the NFL OnePass app. Everyone who downloads and registers for the NFL OnePass app will also be entered for a chance to win a pair of tickets to Super Bowl LVI.

Fans who take Metro to the Los Angeles Convention Center receive 50 percent off their general admission ticket (excluding the SBXtra fast pass) at the box office. Fans must show their TAP Pass at the box office to receive the discount. In addition, all military members and their families receive 50 percent off their general admission tickets (excluding the SBXtra fast pass).

All Super Bowl Experience attendees are required to comply with COVID-19 health and safety protocols. Such protocols may change according to current public health guidance and applicable law. Fans are encouraged to visit **superbowl.com/fan-gameday-playbook** for more information and updates prior to attending.

NFL SHOP AT SUPER BOWL PRESENTED BY VISA

MAIN STORE

Location: Super Bowl Experience Presented by Lowe's – L.A. Convention Center
Hours: Feb. 5 & 10-12 (10 a.m. - 10 p.m.); Feb. 6 (10 a.m. - 8 p.m.); Feb. 7-9 (11 a.m. - 6 p.m.)

The main store will feature core Super Bowl products as well as specialty items, including customizable socks and tees. The assortment also will include all 32 NFL teams. The store is open to the public; a Super Bowl Experience ticket IS NOT required for access or entry to NFL SHOP.

SATELLITE / ON-LINE STORES

Nearly three dozen additional NFL Shop presented by Visa satellite stores are located throughout Los Angeles and surrounding communities. To shop Super Bowl merchandise on-line, go to **nflshop.com/super-bowl-lvi**.

SUPER BOWL EXPERIENCE INFORMATION

HOURS OF OPERATION

Saturday, Feb. 5	12 p.m. - 10 p.m.
Sunday, Feb. 6	10 a.m. - 8 p.m.
Feb. 7 - Feb. 9	CLOSED
Thursday, Feb. 10	3 p.m. - 10 p.m.
Friday, Feb. 11	3 p.m. - 10 p.m.
Saturday, Feb. 12	10 a.m. - 10 p.m.
Sunday, Feb. 13	CLOSED

TICKETS

Super Bowl Experience tickets are on sale at **nfl.com/sbxonsale** and in the NFL OnePass app. No convenience fees will be applied to purchases on Ticketmaster. Fans can also purchase tickets at the box office, located at the South Hall of the Los Angeles Convention Center. The NFL OnePass app is required for entry.

Date	Adult	Metro Discount	Age 12 & Under
Saturday, Feb. 5	$20	$10	Free
Sunday, Feb. 6	$20	$10	Free
Thursday, Feb. 10	$40	$20	Free
Friday, Feb. 11	$40	$20	Free
Saturday, Feb. 12	$40	$20	Free

SBXTRA

SBXTRA tickets may be purchased for $60 for both children and adults while supplies last. This ticket includes a general ticket to Super Bowl Experience, which is required for entry into the event. SBXTRA wristbands are valid for the entire day of issue. Everyone in your party using SBXTRA must have an SBXTRA wristband. Only 50 SBXTRA wristbands are available each hour. Look for the SBXTRA sign at these attractions:

- Autograph Stage (one autograph for each SBXTRA purchase)
- Vince Lombardi Trophy (one photo for each SBXTRA purchase)
- Interactive Games (unlimited access)
- Play Football Clinic Field (unlimited access)

Super Bowl Opening Night marks the beginning of a week-long series of events leading up to Super Bowl LVI.

Rob Carr/Getty Images

WATCH
SUPER BOWL OPENING NIGHT
Presented by Gatorade

Feb. 7 • 8 p.m. (ET)

Super Bowl Opening Night presented by Gatorade marks the kickoff of Super Bowl LVI Week to the nation and will include virtual media availability, including a joint team moment, at the respective AFC and NFC facilities. The event, to be broadcast on NFL Network and ESPN2, is the first public appearance by Super Bowl LVI players and coaches. In addition to the events in Los Angeles, both championship teams will host FREE fan rallies at their home stadiums for fans to celebrate their team. Timing for the fan rallies will be announced the week of Jan. 31.

Titans running back Derrick Henry was among the recipients at last year's *NFL Honors* awards show in Tampa.

Charlie Riedel/AP Images

NFL HONORS
Presented by Invisalign

Feb. 10 • YouTube Theater – Hollywood Park • 9 p.m. (ET)

NFL Honors presented by Invisalign, the primetime awards special that recognizes the NFL's best players, performances, and plays from the 2021 season, takes place Thursday, Feb. 10, at the YouTube Theater and will be televised live on ABC and simulcast on ESPN+ and NFL Network. The show is being hosted by Emmy and Peabody Award-winning actor, writer, and producer Keegan-Michael Key. *NFL Honors* debuted in 2012 and features the announcement of such awards as The Associated Press annual accolades, the Walter Payton NFL Man of the Year presented by Nationwide, and the introduction of the newest Pro Football Hall of Fame class. Learn more at **nfl.com/honors**.

Gwen Stefani is performing as part of the Bud Light Super Bowl LVI Music Fest.

Kevin Winter/Getty Images

LISTEN
BUD LIGHT SUPER BOWL LVI MUSIC FEST
Feb. 10-12 • Crypto.com Arena • 8 p.m. (PT)

The Bud Light Super Bowl LVI Music Fest is heading to downtown Los Angeles and the newly minted Crypto.com Arena. The third annual unofficial kickoff to Super Bowl Weekend starts Thursday, Feb. 10, with performances from Halsey, Machine Gun Kelly, and other special guests. On Feb. 11, Blake Shelton and Gwen Stefani take the stage with Mickey Guyton, ahead of a Saturday show featuring Miley Cyrus and Green Day. Find out more, including ticket availability, at **superbowlmusicfest.com**.

PARTICIPATE
PLAY FOOTBALL FAMILY FESTIVAL
Feb. 12 • Bishop Mora Salesian High School • 10 a.m. (PT)

The 2022 Play Football Family Festival celebrates youth and high school football participants, coaches, programs, and partners. The event will feature NFL Legends autographs, football clinics, equipment fittings, a New Era Cap youth pro camp, NFL FLAG skills and drills station, a parents' forum, breakout panel sessions, and activations from both the Chargers and Rams. Learn more about the Play Football program at **playfootball.nfl.com**.

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DINE
SUPER BOWL BREAKFAST

Feb. 12 • JW Marriott LA Live • 8 a.m. (PT)

2022 SUPER BOWL BREAKFAST FEATURING THE BART STARR AWARD

The NFL-sanctioned Super Bowl Breakfast features the presentation of the Bart Starr Award to a current NFL player, voted on by his peers, for outstanding character, integrity, and leadership on and off the field. The 2022 recipient is Seahawks quarterback Russell Wilson, who headlines a lineup of special guests that includes Colts head coach Frank Reich; Pro Football Hall of Famers Ronnie Lott and Anthony Muñoz; the Saints' Demario Davis and his wife, Tamela; and other NFL greats to be announced. More information and tickets are available at **superbowlbreakfast.com**.

Russell Wilson, the winner of the 2022 Bart Starr Award, will be honored at the Super Bowl Breakfast.

Charlie Riedel/AP Images

TASTE OF THE NFL

Presented by Frito-Lay and The PepsiCo Foundation

Feb. 12 • Petersen Automotive Museum • 12 noon (PT)

NFL TASTE OF THE NFL

Established in 1992, Taste of the NFL is the Super Bowl's premier and iconic annual purpose-driven culinary experience, created to raise awareness and funds to tackle hunger. Starting in 2021, GENYOUth has proudly partnered with the NFL to take this remarkable platform to the next level. Attendees this year will take a Culinary Joyride, including delicious food and cocktails, NFL sports greats and celebrity appearances, and The Equality Lounge® at Taste of the NFL. Celebrity chefs Andrew Zimmern, Carla Hall, Tim Love, Mark Bucher, and Lasheeda Perry, along with other top culinary talent and local Los Angeles-area chefs from The PepsiCo Foundation IMPACTO Hispanic Business Accelerator and Black Restaurant Accelerator programs, will take center "kitchen" with incredible Super Bowl culinary demonstrations. For those not in Los Angeles, a Taste of the NFL @Home will air Feb. 13 at 5:30 p.m. (ET) on NFL Network and will stream on the NFL's YouTube channel. It will feature a special Chalk Talk hosted by Emmy-award winning sportscaster James Brown. Learn more at **tasteofthenfl.com**.

Taste of the NFL has been working to kick hunger for 30 years.

PARTICIPATE
KICKOFF TO REBUILD

Feb. 11 • View Park Neighborhood • 8 a.m. (PT)

Rebuilding Together.

Kickoff to Rebuild is an annual Super Bowl-sanctioned event hosted by Rebuilding Together, a leading national housing nonprofit with a mission to repair the homes of people in need and revitalize communities. For more than 27 years, Rebuilding Together has worked in Super Bowl cities to rebuild homes and bring neighborhoods together. This year's event is being led by local nonprofit affiliate Rebuilding Together Of The City of Angels. In partnership with Lowes, the Official Home Improvement Retail Sponsor of the NFL, Rebuilding Together is providing essential home repairs for 16 neighbors in Los Angeles' View Park neighborhood. To date, through Kickoff to Rebuild, Rebuilding Together has repaired more than 158 homes and invested more than $5 million in communities nationwide. Learn more about this year's event at **rebuildingtogether.org/ktr**.

Rebuilding Together has engaged more than 5,000 volunteers for its annual Kickoff to Rebuild projects.

Eric Tapia/NFL

NFL Network: We're Live from Los Angeles

FOR THE FIRST TIME IN NEARLY 30 YEARS, the Super Bowl returns to Los Angeles – and NFL Network is there to be your one-stop shop for everything surrounding Super Bowl LVI!

NFL Network provides extensive, on-location Super Bowl Week coverage for the 19th time, this year offering more than 90 hours of live programming starting Monday, Feb. 7, through Super Bowl Sunday on Feb. 13.

On Super Bowl Sunday, *NFL GameDay Morning* is live from SoFi Stadium starting at 9 a.m. (ET), kicking off more than eight hours of coverage leading up to the big game – hosted by Rich Eisen, Kurt Warner, Michael Irvin, Steve Mariucci, Ian Rapoport, Cynthia Frelund, Rachel Bonnetta, Kay Adams, and others. Following the game, *NFL GameDay Final* provides postgame analysis and interviews with the Super Bowl LVI champions.

Throughout the week, wake up with *Good Morning Football* (Monday-Friday at 7 a.m.) hosted by Kay Adams, Peter Schrager, Kyle Brandt, Will Selva, and DeAngelo Hall. *Super Bowl Live* (Monday-Friday at 1 p.m., Saturday at 3 p.m.) provides daily updates, analysis, interviews, and practice reports from NFL Network talent based in various locations throughout Los Angeles. Recap the day's action each evening with *NFL Total Access* at 7 p.m. (expands to two hours on Tuesday, Feb. 8; Wednesday, Feb. 9; and Saturday, Feb. 12), hosted by MJ Acosta-Ruiz.

On Monday, Feb. 7, NFL Network provides comprehensive coverage of Super Bowl Opening Night when the two teams address the media for the first time ahead of Super Bowl LVI. Additional primetime specials on NFL Network during the week include *NFL GameDay View* (Friday, Feb. 11, at 8 p.m.), *Super Bowl LVI Countdown* (Saturday, Feb. 12, at 10 p.m.), *Pro Football Hall of Fame Class of 2022 Knocks on the Door* (Saturday, Feb. 12, at 9 p.m.), *NFL 360* (Tuesday, Feb. 8, at 9 p.m.), and more.

For the first time ever, the annual *NFL Honors* show will air live on a new day: Thursday, Feb. 10, at 9 p.m. on NFL Network, and simulcast on ABC and ESPN+. NFL Network's coverage begins at 8 p.m. with *NFL Honors Red Carpet Show*.

For more programming details and information on all of NFL Network's Super Bowl LVI coverage, visit **nfl.com/nflnetwork** and follow **@NFLMedia** on Twitter.

NFL ONEPASS

Download the NFL OnePass app to purchase tickets to Super Bowl Experience presented by Lowe's and to get the most up-to-date Super Bowl LVI news, maps, schedules, and a chance to win tickets to Super Bowl LVI! Available on IOS and ANDROID. Visit **superbowl.com** for more details.

WEBSITE & SOCIAL MEDIA

- For more information on all Super Bowl LVI events, visit **superbowl.com**
- Follow @SuperBowl and @LASBLVI, and tag your posts and photos with #SBLVI
- Questions? Tag your posts with #SBQuestions

NFL ONE PASS

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NBC Is Focused on the Big Game

NBC's Super Bowl broadcast team features (left to right) Kathryn Tappen, Al Michaels, Cris Collinsworth, and Michele Tafoya.

SUPER BOWL LVI FROM SOFI STADIUM marks NBC's 20th Super Bowl broadcast and the debut Super Bowl presentation on NBCUniversal streaming service Peacock. In addition, Telemundo becomes the first-ever Spanish-language broadcast network to air the Super Bowl. In all, NBC Sports will present 80+ hours of comprehensive, week-long Super Bowl coverage across numerous NBCUniversal platforms.

NBC Sports' Emmy Award-winning team has extensive Super Bowl experience. Al Michaels calls his 11th Super Bowl – tying him with Pat Summerall for the most ever for a television play-by-play voice, while analyst Cris Collinsworth and sideline reporter Michele Tafoya are each calling the Super Bowl for the fifth time. Kathryn Tappen, in her first Super Bowl game assignment, also serves as a sideline reporter. Three-time Super Bowl referee Terry McAulay is NBC Sports' rules analyst.

Executive producer Fred Gaudelli and director Drew Esocoff are working their seventh Super Bowl together.

Mike Tirico hosts pregame and postgame coverage alongside Maria Taylor and Jac Collinsworth, and will be joined by *Football Night in America* teammates Tony Dungy, Drew Brees, Chris Simms, Rodney Harrison, Mike Florio, Peter King, and Steve Kornacki. NBC Sports personalities Dale Earnhardt Jr., Rutledge Wood, Michael Holley, and Michael Smith will appear during pregame coverage, while *Access Hollywood*'s Kit Hoover reports from the NFL Tailgate.

NBC Sports' Super Bowl Week and pregame coverage is led by executive producer Sam Flood, produced by Tommy Roy and Matt Casey, and directed by Pierre Moossa.

Peacock is offering more than 55 hours of Super Bowl Week programming on the NBC Sports channel for free, including *Pro Football Talk, Safety Blitz, Chris Simms Unbuttoned, The Peter King Podcast, The Rich Eisen Show, Brother from Another,* and *The Dan Patrick Show.*

NBCUniversal's extensive Super Bowl LVI coverage includes special on-site editions of *TODAY* and *NBC Nightly News with Lester Holt,* as well as reports on CNBC, MSNBC, and NBC Regional Sports Networks, and coverage on *Access* and *E! News.*

Telemundo presents NBCUniversal's Spanish-language news and sports coverage throughout the week, culminating with Super Bowl LVI on Telemundo. Carlos Mauricio Ramirez and Jorge Andres will have the call on Telemundo, alongside studio host Miguel Gurwitz and studio analyst Rolando Cantu. Andres Cantor will make an appearance on NBC Sports' Super Bowl pregame show.

WESTWOOD ONE IS THE RADIO HOME OF THE SUPER BOWL

For the 35th consecutive year and 49th time overall, Westwood One is serving as the exclusive network radio home of the Super Bowl. Beginning at 5 p.m. (ET), Kevin Harlan and Super Bowl XXXIV MVP and Hall of Fame quarterback Kurt Warner will call the action to millions of listeners tuned in across 700 radio stations nationwide, in 175 countries, and nearly 250 ships at sea via the American Forces Radio Network. Fans also can hear the broadcast on SiriusXM, TuneIn, and on NFL Game Pass.

Kevin Harlan (left) and Kurt Warner

This is Harlan's 12th Super Bowl broadcast for the network, and Warner's fourth. CBS Sports rules analyst and former NFL referee Gene Steratore also will join the radio broadcast booth for the second time. The award-winning Laura Okmin and former defensive lineman Mike Golic will serve as sideline reporters. Scott Graham hosts Westwood One's pregame, halftime, and postgame coverage live from SoFi Stadium, with Hall of Famer Terrell Davis and three-time Super Bowl champion Willie McGinest contributing to Westwood One's 4½-hour pregame coverage from Los Angeles, which kicks off at 2 p.m. (ET) with *Super Bowl Preview*. *Super Bowl Insider* begins at 3 p.m. and *Super Sunday* follows at 4 p.m.

Westwood One is the nation's leader in play-by-play radio sports. Among its other exclusive sports properties are the NCAA Championships, including the Men's and Women's Basketball Tournaments and the Final Four, and the Men's and Women's College World Series. Westwood One also produces live programming for the Masters, the PGA, and the Summer and Winter Olympics.

Howard Deneroff is the executive producer of Westwood One Sports. Mike Eaby is the coordinating producer. Aaron Cummins and Brian Finkelstein will produce the Super Bowl LVI pregame and halftime shows for the network.

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Walter Payton NFL Man of the Year

PRESENTED BY NATIONWIDE

The 32 nominees for the 2021 Walter Payton NFL Man of the Year Award presented by Nationwide will be recognized in an on-field ceremony at SoFi Stadium prior to kickoff. As the culmination of a weekend-long series of special events, these men and their families will be honored for their contributions to the game and their communities, followed by the introduction of the 2021 recipient.

Considered the league's most prestigious honor, the Walter Payton NFL Man of the Year Award presented by Nationwide recognizes an NFL player for outstanding community service activities off the field, as well as excellence on the field. Established in 1970, the national award was renamed in 1999 after the late Hall of Fame running back.

Gregory Payan/AP Images

All 32 nominees will receive a donation of up to $40,000 in their name to their charity of choice. The winner of the Walter Payton NFL Man of the Year Award will receive a $250,000 donation to the charity of their choice. All donations are courtesy of the NFL Foundation and Nationwide.

The three current players who have won the award – J.J. Watt, Calais Campbell, and Russell Wilson – continue to wear a Man of the Year patch on their jerseys to recognize their outstanding contributions to the game and to their communities.

See the full list of this year's nominees on **page 55**.

NFL PLAY 60 SUPER KID

Aubrey Anaya

Indio, Calif., native Aubrey Anaya is this year's NFL Play 60 Super Kid. Aubrey was chosen because of her involvement with Fuel Up to Play 60, a program created by the NFL, National Dairy Council, and America's dairy farmers.

Aubrey was the official NFL PLAY 60 Super Kid during Super Bowl Week and will be recognized at the start of the second half of Super Bowl LVI.

Aubrey's dedication to creating a healthier school community made her a natural fit as this year's NFL PLAY 60 Super Kid. She has become a leader at school through her involvement in the Fuel Up to Play 60 program, the nation's largest in-school nutrition and physical activity program. With her Fuel Up to Play 60 Team, Aubrey volunteers to help others learn more about being healthy and staying physically active for at least 60 minutes a day, has distributed food to those in need in her community, and this month is leading a Super Bowl LVI-inspired canned food drive at her school.

She learned of the honor when she was surprised by the hosts of ABC's *Good Morning America*, with the help of her favorite NFL player, Las Vegas Raiders quarterback Derek Carr.

For more information on the NFL Play 60 program, visit **nfl.com/play60**.

Getty Images

Getty Images

GETTING AROUND TOWN

The NFL encourages fans to take Metro to Super Bowl Experience and other destinations during Super Bowl Week, and to book a shuttle parking lot location for gameday. Learn more about transportation options at **nfl.com/super-bowl/event-info/transportation**.

PROTOCOLS FOR ENTRY

Fans will be required to comply with COVID-19 health and safety protocols, including the wearing of masks to enter Super Bowl LVI at SoFi Stadium. Such protocols may change according to current public health guidance and applicable law. For updated gameday protocols, visit: **superbowl.com/fan-gameday-playbook**.

GAMEDAY FAN PLAZA

GameDay Fan Plaza offers an exclusive Super Bowl LVI ticketholder-only pregame experience at SoFi Stadium that runs from 11:30 a.m. until 2:30 p.m. Ticketholders can take photos with the Vince Lombardi Trophy, find exclusive merchandise at NFL Shop presented by Visa, buy food and beverages with A Taste of LA concessions, watch NBC talent on their gameday set, and see entertainment from various stages as we countdown to kickoff!

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Dr. Dre, Snoop Dogg, Eminem, Mary J. Blige, and Kendrick Lamar in a "larger-than-life performance"

PEPSI, THE NFL, AND ROC NATION HAVE ASSEMBLED A LINEUP of trailblazing musicians to perform the *Pepsi Super Bowl LVI Halftime Show:* Dr. Dre, Snoop Dogg, Eminem, Mary J. Blige, and Kendrick Lamar will take the world's biggest stage at SoFi Stadium.

The Pepsi Super Bowl LVI Halftime Show marks the first time these five multi-award-winning artists will perform together, exciting music fans worldwide and holding a special significance for the greater Los Angeles community as it hosts the Super Bowl for the first time in nearly 30 years. Collectively, these artists have been awarded 43 Grammys and created 22 No. 1 Billboard albums.

Dr. Dre is widely credited with being one of the most influential figures in hip-hop culture and a driving force behind its mass popularity. While all five artists have deeply influenced this genre of music, each brings a unique style for what's sure to be 12 minutes of unforgettable greatness.

As part of the collaboration around the *Pepsi Super Bowl Halftime Show*, Pepsi and the NFL also have joined together to support the launch of Regional School #1, a magnet high school in South Los Angeles that is set to open for students in fall 2022 as part of the L.A. Unified School District. The high school is based on the nationally recognized USC Iovine and Young Academy, a program founded by Jimmy Iovine and Andre "Dr. Dre" Young, that will offer a unique educational model focused on the theme of Integrated Design, Technology, and Entrepreneurship.

Marking the third year of this collaboration, Pepsi, the NFL, and Roc Nation are excited to bring these genre-defining artists together for a larger-than-life performance of hits from their deep collective catalog.

The *Pepsi Super Bowl Halftime Show* telecast will be produced by DPS with Roc Nation and Jesse Collins serving as executive producers, and Hamish Hamilton serving as director. Roc Nation also is serving as the strategic entertainment advisors of the live performance.

"The opportunity to perform at the Super Bowl halftime show, and to do it in my own backyard, will be one of the biggest thrills of my career," said Dr. Dre. "I'm grateful to JAY-Z, Roc Nation, the NFL, and Pepsi as well as Snoop Dogg, Eminem, Mary J. Blige, and Kendrick Lamar for joining me in what will be an unforgettable cultural moment."

"Dr. Dre, a musical visionary from Compton, Snoop Dogg, an icon from Long Beach, and Kendrick Lamar, a young musical pioneer in his own right, also from Compton, will take center field for a performance of a lifetime," said Shawn "JAY-Z" Carter. "They will be joined by the lyrical genius, Eminem, and the timeless Queen, Mary J. Blige. This is the *Pepsi Super Bowl Halftime Show*. This is history in the making."

"This year, we are blowing the roof off the concept of collaboration," said Adam Harter, Senior Vice President of Media, Sports, and Entertainment at PepsiCo. "Along with the NFL and Roc Nation, we continue to try and push the limits on what fans can expect during the most exciting 12 minutes in music; this year's superstar lineup is sure to deliver a mind-blowing performance."

"Artists like Dr. Dre and Snoop Dogg were at the forefront of the West Coast hip-hop revolution, so to be able to bring them back to L.A., where it all began, alongside Eminem, Mary J. Blige, and Kendrick Lamar, will prove to be an epic, unforgettable celebration of the impact hip-hop has today," said Todd Kaplan, Pepsi Marketing VP. "The *Pepsi Super Bowl Halftime Show* has become a landmark cultural moment, and we are thrilled to bring together such an incredible array of talented, record-breaking musicians to put on a performance for the ages."

The *Pepsi Super Bowl Halftime Show* is the most-watched musical performance of the year, with nearly 100 million viewers tuning in to last year's show featuring The Weeknd. Super Bowl LVI marks the Pepsi brand's 11th year as title sponsor of the Super Bowl halftime show and 20th year as an NFL partner. Pepsi has a rich history and heritage in music, working with some of the most iconic artists in pop culture over the past several decades. Past halftime performers also include Jennifer Lopez, Shakira, Beyoncé, Justin Timberlake, Lady Gaga, Katy Perry, Bruno Mars, and Madonna.

Photos by AP Images

IN MEMORIAM
JOHN MADDEN
1936-2021

BY PETER KING One thing that's difficult when a person dies is to put his/her life in perspective. My immediate thought when John Madden died at age 85 in late December was, *Madden belongs on the NFL's Mount Rushmore.* But that was kneejerk. Did he really? Was he really a seminal figure in pro football history, and could he really be one of the four most important people in the history of pro football?

That would put him in league with the true difference-makers in football history, the architects, the vital commissioners, the greatest players. (And the pitchmen. "Boom! Tough-actin' Tinactin!") Maybe I was overstating the importance of this rumpled guy who, in everyday life, wasn't much concerned with tying his shoes and tucking in his shirt.

No. Actually, I might have been underrating him.

As I look at the history of this game, I believe Madden is the most influential, important, and accomplished person in pro football history. How many people have made a big name in football, and then have been truly great at two other football things in their lives?

Madden is one of 27 coaches in the Pro Football Hall of Fame. He retired at age 42 and never wanted back in. His winning percentage is by far the best of any coach with at least 125 regular-season games coached. One: Madden, 103-32-7, .759. Two: Vince Lombardi, 96-34-6, .738.

Madden is probably the greatest color analyst in the history of

American sport. He did it for 30 years, spreading his greatness on CBS, FOX, ABC, and NBC.

Madden put his name and imprint and expertise in the Madden video game, the most popular sports video game in American history. The Madden video franchise has grossed more than $7 billion. Micah Parsons, the great Dallas Cowboys rookie, told me Madden, and the Madden game, taught him more about football than any other person did.

I love pro football history. I've thought about and researched this. I think there's no other person who was as accomplished at three distinct pro football things in history. There are people who have done several things. George Halas played for, coached, and owned early iterations of the Chicago Staleys/Bears. Jimmy Conzelman was a player, coach, and owner, too, in the early days. But no one would say Halas or Conzelman was a great owner; that's not what they were known for. Jim Thorpe is a Pro Football Hall of Famer, and also won two Olympic gold medals in 1912 and played pro baseball, but only one of those was a football thing.

Zach Bolinger/AP Images

Actually, the best example of a football person who was great at three things was very good at only one football discipline. Byron "Whizzer" White won NFL rushing titles in 1938 and 1940. In the U.S. Navy in World War II, he was a war hero, winning two Bronze Stars for his espionage expertise in naval intelligence from 1942 to 1945. Then, nominated to the Supreme Court by President John F. Kennedy in 1962, he served as a justice for 31 years. I mean, Whizzer White was never on the cover of the Madden game, but he had a pretty good public run.

But nobody matches Madden's contributions to football. Nobody.

Think of the worldwide influence of this man. I write a weekly column for NBC Sports called "Football Morning in America," and when he died, I sought out people whose lives had been impacted by Madden. I asked them to write to me to tell me how.

Erik Burkhardt, a big player agent (Kyler Murray, Baker Mayfield) wrote to say he was a poor kid in San Antonio who shoplifted the Madden game around 1993 and used it to fall in love with football. Later, broke trying to live his dream as an agent, Burkhardt ran into Madden and hung in after Madden said to him, "Do what you love and you'll never work a day in your life."

Larry Arseniadis, a retired Fortune 500 exec, wrote to say Madden affected his leadership style. Arseniadis began talking to every one of his underlings every day after reading that was a key to Madden's success as a coach – don't talk to a player only when he's done something good or bad. Talking daily to players/employees shows you care.

Dan Cullen-Shute wrote from Wales to say the Madden game and Madden telecasts when the NFL was in its infancy on European TV got him and generations into the NFL. "I think I speak for most UK-based football fans when I say I have Madden to thank for my entire understanding of the game," he said.

Chris Glenn, a high school football coach from western New York, wrote to say Madden taught him his most valuable coaching lesson ever. "The players are most important," Glenn said. "They are why we coach. It doesn't matter the level. He loved his players. I love my players."

Todd Hunt from Alpharetta, Ga., wrote to say the Madden game was the substitute dad that helped teach his son the game they both love. Little Brendan was playing in the yard with his dad one day and kicked off – a low, bouncy line drive. Dad asked what that was. "A squib kick," Brendan said. "I learned it this morning playing Madden."

Colleen Wolfe, the NFL Network anchor, said she learned the game and began loving the game from watching the all-too-human Madden talk about the game on TV when she was a pre-teen in suburban Philadelphia. "It's completely fair to say he got so many women into football," she said.

So many *people.* Madden got millions into the game, tens of millions, with his voice, with his fun, with his video realism. Amazing and ironic, really, that all he wanted to be known as is a football coach. For years after he retired from coaching, as his profile on TV and in business got mega, he still just wanted people to think he'd been a very good football coach. And, of course, he had been. But in the end, it's the other stuff that dwarfed his coaching résumé – even though, wow, what a résumé it was.

"DO WHAT YOU LOVE AND YOU'LL NEVER WORK A DAY IN YOUR LIFE." – JOHN MADDEN

There was another trait, a vital one, that Madden had and was so important to the impact he had on football. (And life.)

Curiosity.

In 1990, I took a ride on his Madden Cruiser from the Bay Area to New York City, where he'd do a Giants game that week. He was famously claustrophobic and would not get on an airplane anymore, and I was there to document the 3,016-mile journey for *Sports Illustrated.* On a warm, late-September Thursday afternoon, on I-80 in the middle of Nebraska, he looked out the front window and saw a blazing reddish-purple field of wildflowers. "Stop the bus, Willie," he said to one of his two drivers, Willie Yarbrough. Madden grabbed a book from a bus drawer, *Wildflowers Across America,* and walked off the bus up into the meadow of flowers.

It took a few minutes of page-flipping, but he finally found these: Spotted Knapweed. He was so happy to have another fragment of American knowledge. Madden loved finding out things he didn't know, about football and people and life. Because of John Madden, we're lucky we got to know a lot about them, too.

Peter King, *a three-time National Sportswriter of the Year and the author of five books, writes the weekly "Football Morning in America" column for NBC Sports. He spent 29 years (1989-2018) at* Sports Illustrated.

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DRAWING THE LINE

THERE'S NEVER BEEN A SHUTOUT IN THE SUPER BOWL, BUT FIVE DEFENSES HAVE DONE THE NEXT BEST THING.

BY KIM JONES

Patrick Smith/Getty Images

Bucs defenders Carlton Davis (24), Anthony Nelson (98), and Antoine Winfield Jr. (31) wrap up the Chiefs' Darrel Williams during Super Bowl LV. As part of its 31-9 victory, Tampa Bay became the first team in 63 games to keep Kansas City from scoring in double figures.

Legendary University of Alabama football coach Bear Bryant once said that while offense sells tickets, "Defense wins championships."

In the NFL – and especially throughout the history of the Super Bowl – that theory has been put to the test time and again. And the conclusion? For every "Greatest Show on Turf" that hoists the Lombardi Trophy, there is a "Steel Curtain" to answer it.

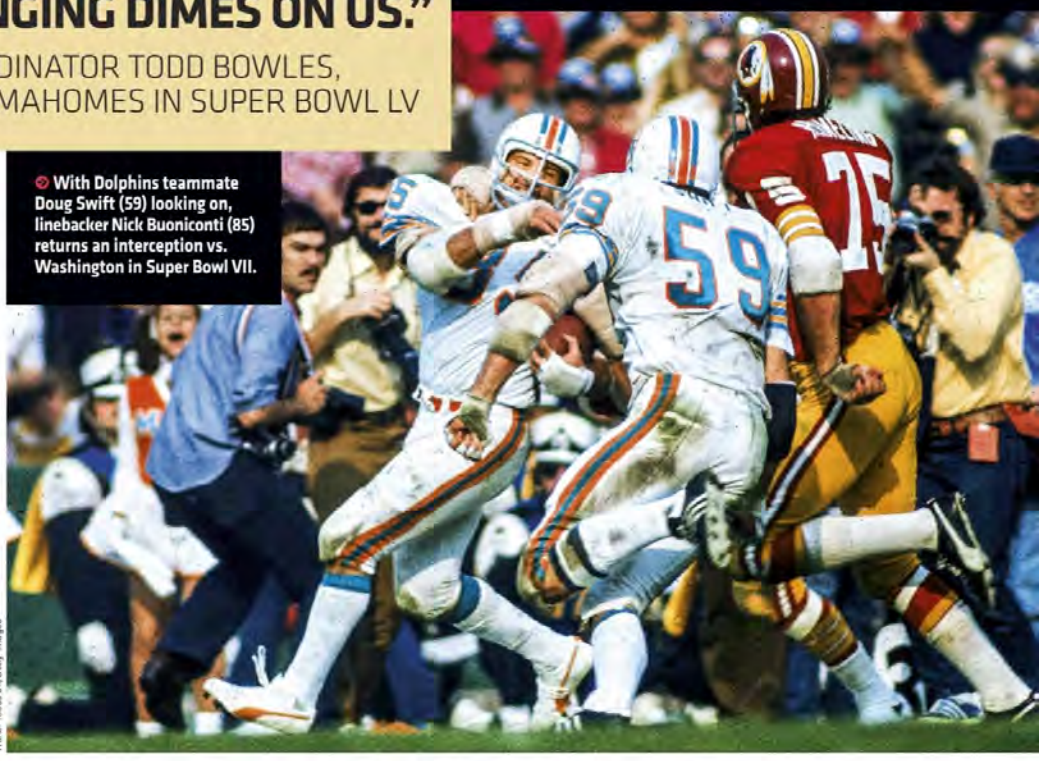
Just a year ago, NFL teams averaged a record-setting 24.8 points per game. But in Super Bowl LV, the Tampa Bay Buccaneers did the unimaginable: They kept the Kansas City Chiefs, who racked up 473 points during the regular season and had scored in double figures in 62 consecutive games, out of the end zone on their way to a 31-9 victory. In doing so, their defense became the fifth to not surrender a touchdown in the Super Bowl, joining the Dallas Cowboys (Super Bowl VI), Miami Dolphins (VII), Baltimore Ravens (XXXV), and New England Patriots (LIII).

AP Images

Cowboys defensive tackle Bob Lilly (74) chases down Dolphins QB Bob Griese for a sack in Super Bowl VI. Lilly's efforts helped Dallas become the first team to not allow a touchdown in the Super Bowl.

"WE DIDN'T WANT HIM IN THE POCKET JUST ZINGING DIMES ON US."

–BUCS DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR TODD BOWLES, ON DEFENSING PATRICK MAHOMES IN SUPER BOWL LV



With Dolphins teammate Doug Swift (59) looking on, linebacker Nick Buoniconti (85) returns an interception vs. Washington in Super Bowl VII.

Walter Iooss Jr./Getty Images

The game plan authored by defensive coordinator Todd Bowles thwarted Chiefs quarterback Patrick Mahomes from the start, though those on the Buccaneers sideline didn't need long memories to know this was the same Mahomes who rallied Kansas City with 21 fourth-quarter points to overtake the San Francisco 49ers in Super Bowl LIV.

Inside linebackers Lavonte David and Devin White made sure there wouldn't be a repeat performance. White, who had 12 tackles and intercepted a pass in the waning minutes, was arguably the game's best player – even if QB Tom Brady walked away with his fifth Super Bowl MVP Award.

For his part, Bowles departed from his usual pressure-intense script; he called only five blitzes in the game. Still, the Bucs' pass-rush was able to unsettle Mahomes while also taking away his first read. The result? The Chiefs' signal-caller completed less than half his passes, was picked off twice, and suffered three sacks.

"We didn't want him in the pocket just zinging dimes on us," says Bowles, who earned his first Super Bowl ring 34 years ago when he started at free safety for Washington's Super Bowl XXII champions.

While today's NFL is driven by offense, the 1970s were the heyday of defenses – and defensive nicknames – dominating the Super Bowl. The Pittsburgh Steelers' "Steel Curtain," the Cowboys' "Doomsday Defense," and the Dolphins' "No Name Defense" helped deliver their teams eight Super Bowl championships in a nine-year span.

That title run started in Super Bowl VI, which remains the coldest Super Bowl ever played (a brisk 39 degrees at kickoff at Tulane Stadium in New Orleans). The Cowboys, with nine future Hall of Famers on the field, rolled over the Dolphins, 24-3, their dominance defined by one incredible play and a highly effective game plan.

The play? With seconds remaining in the first quarter, defensive lineman Bob Lilly pursued and pursued Dolphins quarterback Bob Griese

Here's to

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Patriots defensive back Jason McCourty (30) prevents a touchdown catch by the Rams' Brandin Cooks during the third quarter of Super Bowl LIII. The game, won by New England, 13-3, stands as the lowest-scoring in Super Bowl history.

Doug Benc/AP Images

until he finally brought him down for a 29-yard sack – 29 yards! – still regarded (albeit unofficially) as the longest sack ever recorded in a Super Bowl.

In more recent years, even Lilly's own description of the play's conclusion reflected incredulity: "I cannot even begin to tell you. It was relief."

The game plan? Under legendary coach Tom Landry, the Cowboys went into that Super Bowl determined to contain Dolphins wide receiver Paul Warfield and linebacker Nick Buoniconti – and did so basically by double-teaming them. In the box score, Buoniconti was credited with seven tackles.

As for Warfield, everyone knew he was Griese's favorite target, including the President of the United States. Several years before his death in 2020, Dolphins Hall of Fame coach Don Shula recounted a conversation he had with President Richard Nixon, who apparently had become a Dolphins fan and phoned the coach to offer advice: "I still think you can hit Paul Warfield on that down-and-in pattern."

"I said, 'Yeah, that's a good idea,'" Shula said. "Warfield was a great receiver, one of our biggest threats."

The Dolphins tried the play; Dallas cornerback Mel Renfro deflected it away. Lilly's sack came moments later on third-and-9. It was that kind of day for Miami, whose lone points came on a 31-yard Garo Yepremian field goal.

A year later, the Dolphins reversed roles. This time playing in the warmest Super Bowl ever (the temperature at Los Angeles' Memorial Coliseum was a balmy 84 degrees at kickoff), they defeated Washington, 14-7, to become the first NFL team to complete a perfect season. They intercepted QB Billy Kilmer three times, one of those by Buoniconti to set up a touchdown. Jake Scott, the game's MVP, had the others, including one in the end zone in the fourth quarter to keep Washington off the scoreboard.

And while the Dolphins later surrendered a TD, it was on special teams. The "Garo Goof," as it became known, happened when Yepremian recovered his own blocked field-goal attempt only to fumble the ball into the arms of Washington's Mike Bass, who raced 49 yards to the end zone to make it a one-score game.

No worries. Washington's final possession produced two incomplete passes, a completion that lost 4 yards, and a game-ending sack by defensive end Bill Stanfill.

Likewise, the Ravens allowed a touchdown in their 34-7 victory over the Giants in Super Bowl XXXV. Again, don't blame the defense. Ron Dixon's 97-yard kickoff-return TD in the third quarter marked the Giants' lone taste of paydirt, and even that joy was temporary. Baltimore's Jermaine Lewis answered it with an 84-yard kickoff-return touchdown of his own.

Lewis' score gave the Ravens a 24-7 lead, plenty for a defense that set NFL records for fewest points (165) and fewest rushing yards (970) allowed in a 16-game season. In the Super Bowl, they forced five turnovers, sacked quarterback Kerry Collins four times, and surrendered just 11 first downs and 152 total yards.

"You can't say you're the greatest until you win a Super Bowl and break the all-time scoring record," Ravens coach Brian Billick said afterward. "Well, we did. That is a record that will never be broken."

Al Tielemans/Getty Images

Michael Strahan (92) goes airborne to bring down quarterback Tom Brady for one of the Giants' five sacks during their stunning victory over the Patriots in Super Bowl XLII.

GIANT EFFORTS OF THEIR OWN

While lauding superb defensive efforts in the Super Bowl, one must note a pair of truly splendid performances by the New York Giants. In Super Bowls XXV (vs. the Bills) and XLII (vs. the Patriots), the Giants allowed touchdowns but still stymied two of the most potent offenses in NFL history.

It was Bill Belichick, at the time the Giants' defensive coordinator, who authored the game plan against the Bills. He knew his defense had to contain Buffalo's lethal no-huddle offense, and to do so, he wanted to encourage them to run the ball. His players didn't immediately embrace the idea.

Linebacker Carl Banks said the defensive players "were in an uproar" until Belichick explained the rationale.

"I think the running game was the least of our concerns in that game," Belichick said later. "I didn't feel like we wanted to get into a game where they threw the ball 45 times. I knew if they had some success running the ball, they would stay with it."

The Giants further constrained the Bills with unconventional defenses, often having just two defensive linemen on the field – using a 2-4-5 or a 2-3-6 alignment. When it was all over, the Giants were 20-19 victors, successfully frustrating a Bills offense that had scored 44 points and 51 points, respectively, in the Divisional Playoffs and AFC Championship Game.

And the entire game plan from that day now resides in the Pro Football Hall of Fame, a big blue binder of championship football.

Belichick was on the other side of the story in Super Bowl XLII, when the Giants quieted the Patriots, 17-14, and ended New England's quest for the NFL's second "perfect" season. It ranks as one of the Super Bowl's biggest upsets.

The most memorable play may have been wide receiver David Tyree's miraculous catch – when he pinned the ball to his helmet for a 32-yard reception in the fourth quarter – but it was the Giants' defense that did much of the work. They limited QB Tom Brady and the explosive Patriots to 14 points and fewer than 300 total yards, well below the 36.8 points and 411 yards they averaged during the regular season.

In the spring after that game, Giants standout defensive end Michael Strahan announced his retirement. Following 15 seasons in the NFL, he departed as a champion.

– Kim Jones

The Giants knew they had to change their offensive rhythm, but nothing seemed to work. At halftime, running back Tiki Barber heard the plan was to switch to a no-huddle offense. "Oh, great," he recalls thinking, "now we can go three-and-out even faster than we already are." (For the record, the Giants went three-and-out nine times in the game.)

Leading the Ravens' defense were linebacker Ray Lewis (who earned game MVP honors) and defensive back Rod Woodson, both future Hall of Famers, and the big personality of defensive tackle Tony Siragusa, who said he never wanted to leave the field that day. Ultimately, he did – with three minutes to go in a contest that was long decided.

Ironically, for all the offense the NFL has seen in recent years, Super Bowl LIII ranks as the lowest-scoring Super Bowl in history. The Patriots' 13-3 win over the Los Angeles Rams was significant in other ways as well, among them being New England's sixth championship, tying Pittsburgh for the most Super Bowl titles.

The game's lone touchdown came on Sony Michel's 2-yard run with seven minutes remaining. But the day's biggest play occurred in

Doug Pensinger/Getty Images

Ray Lewis (52) breaks up a pass intended for the Giants' Howard Cross during the Ravens' victory in Super Bowl XXXV. Baltimore's defense didn't allow a point in the 34-7 win; New York's lone score came on a kickoff-return touchdown.

the third quarter when Patriots cornerback Jason McCourty somehow covered 19.5 yards in 2.4 seconds (according to Next Gen Stats) to break up Jared Goff's end zone pass to a seemingly open Brandin Cooks.

"I was running my tail off," McCourty says of the play, which helped limit the Rams to a field goal. "I didn't know if I was going to make it."

Patriots coach Bill Belichick had an uncharacteristically effusive reaction: "Oh my God. That was a tremendous effort and a great play on the ball. It looked like [Cooks] was going to fair catch the ball."

The outcome made Belichick, then age 66, the oldest head coach to win a Super Bowl, but that record was eclipsed last year by the 68-year-old Bruce Arians (whose 95-year-old mother, Catherine, was in attendance for the game).

Just like great coaches, great defense never gets old.

Kim Jones is an NFL Network reporter based in the New York metropolitan area and a sports talk radio host at WFAN-AM.

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Since opening in 2020, SoFi Stadium and Hollywood Park have become a hub of NFL activity. They're the home to both the Rams and the Chargers and house the league's West Coast headquarters.

SoSPECTA

Kyusung Gong/AP Images

LOS ANGELES' SOFI STADIUM IS THE LATEST, PERHAPS THE GREATEST, NFL STADIUM MASTERPIECE.

BY BILL DWYRE

CULAR

The goal this time is for Super Bowl LVI to throw a party worthy of its host. That host is SoFi Stadium, a venue likely to send fans and visiting media members struggling for adequate superlatives. The Seven Wonders of the World include pyramids and great walls. SoFi Stadium has neither, but it might get votes for No. 7½.

Usually, the NFL spruces up the Super Bowl game site and surrounding areas for the proper razzle-dazzle and celebratory big-day feel. No need this year. SoFi Stadium has taken care of that all by itself.

St. Louis. Kroenke first purchased a 60-acre parcel just to the south of the once-famed Fabulous Forum and soon added another 238 acres where the race track and barns had been.

That provided more than enough room to build a football stadium and surrounding entertainment district, and when Kroenke, long a resident of Malibu, set his sights on taking his team from St. Louis back to its former home in Los Angeles, SoFi Stadium was born. (SoFi is the naming rights-holder. It is an acronym for Social Finance.)

SOFI STADIUM IS SO LUXURIOUS AND COMFORTABLE AT THE SAME TIME THAT THE SUPER BOWL'S FIRST VISIT HERE CERTAINLY WON'T BE ITS LAST.

As the show arrives for LVI, the Rams and the Chargers – the two franchises that call SoFi Stadium home – will have finished a season in their new digs with real crowds and a real NFL feel in the wake of nearly two years of crippling coronavirus restrictions. But a Super Bowl brings national and international attention, and if there ever was a venue up to the task, it is SoFi Stadium.

The project, a 70,000-seat stadium that can be expanded up to 100,000 for special events – such as the 2028 L.A. Olympics – is built on the site of the longtime Hollywood Park race track, which had its own celebrity feel for much of its 75 years of thoroughbred racing.

It was sold in 2005 to a real estate development firm, Stockbridge, and closed after the last race Dec. 22, 2013. The plan was to fill the space with hotels, restaurants, stores, and housing. But along came Rams owner Stan Kroenke, a multi-billionaire with an NFL team in

Kroenke is the owner and visionary. Early on in the process, he told the *Los Angeles Times:* "It will be a first-class, beautiful building."

It's turned out to be a lot more than that. In the midst of the Hollywood Park complex, which will eventually include retail business, housing, and 25 acres of public parks and open space, is the state-of-the-art, seven-story office building that is the home of NFL Los Angeles, which includes the headquarters of NFL Media. Those operations include NFL.com, NFL Films, NFL App, and NFL Red Zone, which were previously located in Culver City. Adjacent to SoFi Stadium and sharing the same iconic canopy roof is the 2.5-acre American Airlines Plaza and a new 6,000-seat performance venue called YouTube Theater.

There are elevators and escalators and wide pathways everywhere. The gigantic four touchdown points of the canopy roof resemble ski slopes or Star Wars cities. The building is open on all sides, with giant

Mpu Dinani/Los Angeles Chargers

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columns supporting the roof but no walls. This allows a nice flow of air from the Pacific Ocean, located just six miles to the west, but nobody gets rained on because the roof canopy is fully covered by 302 ETFE panels. That might be needed in Los Angeles about three days a year. What is crucial is that those panels, strong enough to drive a truck across, are designed to use the prevailing breezes to keep the inside of SoFi Stadium four degrees cooler than the outside.

SoFi Stadium is built along the path of planes landing at Los Angeles International Airport, so designers dug down 100 feet – resulting in more than 7 million cubic feet of dirt being displaced (and reused on site) – before putting in the playing field. The top of SoFi Stadium is now quite close to the height of the old Hollywood Park grandstand. The open-air design is enhanced on several levels by native California trees along terraced walkways and escalators. Some of that is in the VIP luxury box area. There are 262 luxury boxes in all.

From those boxes, there is a perfect view of an unprecedented scoreboard: a 360-degree dual-sided Infinity Screen by Samsung. It is bigger than the one that is the pride of Jerry Jones' AT&T Stadium in Dallas, and more visually accessible. A fan sitting in the lower level, for instance, can see the graphics being presented by looking up at the interior board on the far side; a fan up higher can get the same information on the close side directly in front of him.

This architectural gem did not come without some hitches. The deep digging and unrelenting rain brought the announcement in May 2017 that the stadium, scheduled to open in 2019, would take an additional year to complete. There were occasionally consecutive days when the 100-foot hole for the stadium base would be filled with water and the only real work getting done was pumping the water out. Then COVID-19 swept the country.

But Kroenke never blinked, even after discovering that the professional cost estimates he had commissioned turned out to be well short of reality.

"[Stan] never wavered in delivering the right stadium," says Kevin Demoff, now in his 13th season as the Rams' chief operating officer. "He kept reminding me that this was Los Angeles, with its spectacular architecture in the likes of Disney Hall and the Getty Museum. He said, over and over again, 'You can't undersell Los Angeles.'"

While waiting for SoFi Stadium, the Rams and the Chargers gave Los Angeles something it hadn't experienced in more than two decades: NFL football. From 2016-19, the Rams played at the Los Angeles Coliseum (their home when they first moved to L.A. in 1946); the Chargers, who started in the city as a charter member of the American Football League, set up shop at Dignity Health Sports Park in Carson in 2017.

The Rams have made multiple postseason appearances since their return, including in 2018 when they advanced to Super Bowl LIII. The Chargers went 12-4 that same season and made it two rounds into the playoffs. Then, in 2020, the Chargers unveiled one of the game's most exciting players, rookie quarterback Justin Herbert. Prior to this season, the Rams traded for veteran quarterback Matthew Stafford.

SoFi Stadium is a place so cavernous that *Los Angeles Times* NFL columnist Sam Farmer, with Kroenke in mind, designated it "Stan's Canyon." But it is also so luxurious and comfortable at the same time that the Super Bowl's first visit here certainly won't be its last.

There is no question about one thing. SoFi Stadium, as they would say in Hollywood, is ready for its close-up.

Bill Dwyre is a longtime sportswriter and editor with the Los Angeles Times. *Among his many accolades was being named the 2009 California Sportswriter of the Year by the National Association of Sportscasters and Sportswriters.*

LA Rams

Rams receiver Robert Woods kicked off the cleanup efforts with Castrol® and Keep America Beautiful in Los Angeles and Charlotte, the home cities of Castrol® sustainability.

Giving an Edge to the Environment

From ongoing efforts throughout the Hollywood Park development to team-specific partnerships with Castrol® and special programs surrounding Super Bowl LVI, the Rams, Chargers, and NFL are stepping up in important ways to protect the environment and strengthen communities.

Rams, Castrol® Team Up – Throughout the 2021 season, the Rams partnered with Castrol® to reduce their environmental impact through new sustainability initiatives, both at home and on the road. With the help of Castrol®, the Rams offset carbon emission from air travel to away games, an NFL first. Castrol® and the Rams also teamed up with Keep America Beautiful – the largest community improvement organization in the United States – to clean up waste in every city the Rams visited during the season. In addition, the Rams have partnered in local beach cleanup initiatives.

Chargers Show Their Commitment – The Chargers' environmental outreach has included planting trees as part of the Paramount Ranch restoration project – an area destroyed by the Woolsey brush fire; beach cleanups throughout Southern California that include Mother's Beach in Long Beach, Hermosa Beach in Los Angeles' South Bay, and Huntington Beach in Orange County; and partnering with Friends of the LA River to pick up trash littering the LA River area in an effort to both beautify and prevent the refuse from further contaminating runoff.

Waste Management and Landfill Diversion – There is a two-stream waste collection system throughout SoFi Stadium and Hollywood Park, and surplus edible food is donated to a food recovery agency for redistribution to food insecure populations, while used cooking oil is provided to a vendor to be converted into biofuel. In addition, through a partnership with Ball Aluminum, SoFi Stadium is being provided with infinitely recyclable aluminum cups.

Water Quality – SoFi Stadium and Hollywood Park utilize nearby recycled water connections to provide approximately 26 million gallons of reclaimed water for irrigation, maintenance, and aesthetic purposes, saving an equal amount of drinkable water for the region. Two-thirds of the Hollywood Park storm drain system is connected to the six-acre lake in Lake Park via an arroyo system and an on-site water treatment plant, making it the only wet pond water quality system in Southern California.

Additional Programs – SoFi Stadium is tracking baseline consumption for waste, energy, and water to understand the environmental impact of day-to-day and event-day operations, and continues to explore opportunities for renewable resource management, while fans attending events at the stadium are encouraged to use alternative modes of transportation, such as public transportation options, and active transportation, with the creation of bike parking. Community efforts include programs to beautify local parks in Inglewood, participating in cleanups in the Greater Los Angeles area, and tackling food insecurity by hosting food drives in surrounding communities.

Super Bowl LVI – To learn more about the NFL and Los Angeles Super Bowl Host Committee's environmental efforts, see page 210.

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RESILIENCE WITH RESULTS

In 1995, Los Angeles found itself without an NFL team for the first time since 1946 – the year the Rams relocated to L.A. from Cleveland.

Following the 1994 season, the Rams headed to St. Louis and the Raiders moved back to Oakland. Nearly two decades later, NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell wrote a memo to NFL owners outlining what it would take for an NFL team or teams to return to Los Angeles, specifically mentioning "a single site where an iconic facility could credibly host two teams and provide ancillary entertainment and development opportunities."

It would take someone with the right blend of professional experience and personal interests to deliver for the NFL a project so iconic and transformative that it would be perfect for Los Angeles.

Los Angeles Times columnist Sam Farmer, who had seen many such proposals rise and fall during his time covering the league, wrote in 2016, "Stan Kroenke solved the riddle that perplexed the NFL for over 20 years. He had the drive and resources to make the commitment and did what no one else could do."

The man who was raised in the tiny Missouri town of Mora (population 23), and who swept floors as a youngster in his father's lumber yard, might have once seemed an unlikely person to own an NFL franchise in one of the world's preeminent sports and entertainment markets – and build for his team the Los Angeles football Taj Mahal known as SoFi Stadium.

For most of his adult life, Kroenke's business has been real estate development. In the early '80s, he founded the Kroenke Group, a firm that today develops and owns shopping centers, apartments, warehouses, and sports facilities throughout North America and Europe. Of all his developments, the crown jewel sits in Inglewood, the home to his Rams and to the Chargers, and the host of Super Bowl LVI.

"The NFL had wanted to come back to L.A. for more than two decades. I had been on the (Stadium) committee for a number of years, and they thought I had a little expertise in real estate development and that I could help them out," Kroenke said at the January 2016 press conference announcing the Rams' return to Los Angeles and the blueprint that would become SoFi Stadium. "I had learned how hard it was to get something done out here, really to focus in and do it right.

"This is all about football really," he said, before adding, "This is about the great history of the Los Angeles Rams."

Kroenke joined the Rams ownership group in 1995, their first year in St. Louis, and had a right of first refusal if they were ever put up for sale. That happened in 2010, when he purchased the remaining shares from the estate of the late Georgia Frontiere.

The Rams added to Kroenke's extensive sports ownership portfolio that has included the NHL's Colorado Avalanche and the NBA's Denver Nuggets, Arsenal FC of England's Premier League, the Colorado Rapids of Major League Soccer, and the National Lacrosse League's Colorado Mammoth.

His sports business diversification also includes Denver's Ball Arena, several media companies, and two eSports teams.

"It is evident that Stan knows how to achieve success in the sports world," Rams general manager Les Snead says. "His teams have won championships in five different sports, and he has experience in building a contender. The success we have experienced through the NFL Draft and free agency would not have been possible without Stan's support and his willingness to take risks to build this team."

One of the biggest risks was moving the Rams back to Los Angeles. There were other suitors looking to move to the city – as well as plenty of skeptics – but Kroenke's proposal, which called for development on a huge tract of land that once housed Hollywood Park race track, eventually won out. In January 2016, NFL owners voted to approve the Rams' application to relocate.

"There's a huge, huge risk," Kroenke admitted to reporters at the time, "because you are doing something at a cost no one's ever done before."

One of the NFL's most vocal owners, the Dallas Cowboys' Jerry Jones, championed Kroenke's cause.

"Stan has the vision, resources, inspiration, and creativity to create the right setting for the NFL in Los Angeles," Jones said at the time. "I have great admiration for his talent and skills, and I have great confidence in his leadership ability in guiding our league back into this very important community. He sees the big picture, knows how to do things on the big stage, and he knows how to do what's best for the long-term future."

Once SoFi Stadium and Hollywood Park opened in 2020, Dean Spanos, whose Chargers joined Kroenke's Rams at SoFi Stadium, shared his perspective on what Kroenke had given to the NFL and to L.A.

Courtesy of the Los Angeles Rams

IN HIS OWN QUIET WAY, RAMS OWNER STAN KROENKE HAS BUILT A FORWARD-LOOKING VISION FOR HIS FRANCHISE AND THE CITY IN WHICH IT PLAYS.

BY BILL DWYRE

Courtesy of the Los Angeles Rams

Chris Graythen/Getty Images

Rams legends and Pro Football Hall of Famers Eric Dickerson (far left) and Isaac Bruce (far right) pose with Stan Kroenke and Rams COO Kevin Demoff (second from right) along the SoFi Stadium sidelines. Kroenke (right) is interviewed by FOX Sports' Terry Bradshaw following the Rams' victory in the 2018 NFC Championship Game. After first joining the Rams ownership group in 1995, Kroenke became the team's sole owner in 2010.

Courtesy of the Los Angeles Rams

"I think what Stan has done here, in his creativity with this whole development, this probably is going to redefine this area of Los Angeles for the next century," Spanos, the Chargers' owner/chairman, told the Associated Press. "It's going to be something that L.A. is very proud to have."

The construction of SoFi Stadium and Hollywood Park has already left a lasting impact on the community. Since construction began, more than 17,000 workers have completed more than 18 million worker hours across the project.

Kroenke took another risk when he hired 30-year-old Sean McVay – the youngest head coach in modern NFL history – to lead the Rams in 2017. His faith was rewarded a year later when McVay directed the Rams to Super Bowl LIII. More winning seasons and playoff appearances have followed.

Those who know Kroenke see his quiet strength, the result of a close-knit family. Terry Fancher, head of the development firm that sold Kroenke the final 238-acre Hollywood Park parcel that made the project viable, provides a helpful perspective on those family ties.

"It's (SoFi) something that is going to be in his family long after he is gone," Fancher told the *Los Angeles Times*.

That family bond dates back to working in his dad's lumber yard and back to evenings listening to the radio with his grandfather. A talented athlete who played baseball, basketball, and ran track at Cole Camp High School and would earn his Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science, and Masters of Business Administration degrees from the University of Missouri, Kroenke met his future wife, Ann Walton, while on a ski vacation. They married in 1974.

Some five decades later, his son Josh is deeply involved with Kroenke Sports & Entertainment, which was founded in 1999. His daughter, Whitney, is a film producer and philanthropist who lives in Los Angeles.

For Kroenke, building relationships is as important as constructing stadiums. Soon after the Rams' move to Southern California, the team launched its first annual community improvement project in partnership with the Inglewood Unified School District.

That outreach continued during the recent COVID-19 pandemic, when the Rams hosted food drives that fed thousands of families and opened Hollywood Park as a vaccination site for Los Angeles Unified School District teachers and staff. In 2020 alone, the Rams contributed more than $4.5 million in support of the Los Angeles community, provided more than 1,100 hours of community service, and impacted 230 schools through community outreach programs.

At a league level, Kroenke serves on the NFL's Broadcast Committee, was previously part of the Workplace Diversity Committee, and worked with other NFL owners to negotiate the 2011 Collective Bargaining Agreement with the NFL Players Association.

From his service on important league committees to his commitment to bringing the NFL and the Rams back to Los Angeles, Kroenke is one of the key people shaping the next century for the National Football League.

"When we laid down our expectations for the NFL to return to Los Angeles, we said we would need an iconic two-team stadium and an adjacent entertainment district. Stan, you have delivered on all of that and more," Goodell said at SoFi Stadium's ribbon cutting.

When so many others made wrong turns, the kid from Mora, Mo., drove the NFL bus back into Los Angeles.

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LEADING THE CHARGE

Maybe it's the twinkle of the skyline at night, the sun's reflection off the blue Pacific, or the glamour of the Hollywood sign perched high above Sunset Boulevard.

Whatever it is, the lure is undeniable.

We're of course talking about Los Angeles – an aspirational place people flock to in pursuit of their dreams. And if things don't go as planned? Hey, write about it and sell the script to Warner Brothers.

One script a Hollywood studio might consider too far-fetched would be the life story of Alex Spanos, a man whose journey from the family bakery to sandwich salesman to real estate developer to NFL owner is the true embodiment of the American Dream.

"Dad proved that dreams really can come true," says Dean Spanos in a rare quiet moment before his team's mid-summer practice is slated to begin. "He was born in Stockton (Calif.), where my grandparents, who were Greek immigrants, had settled. And even though he grew up in the Great Depression era, he somehow went on to have this tremendous gift and passion for business.

"One of his most impressive qualities was understanding the character of different people he was dealing with. On top of that, whether it was quitting the family bakery to start his own catering business or when he began investing in real estate and later got into construction – he was a risk taker. But they were calculated risks. Always. Every move he made led to that moment in 1984 when he bought the Chargers and ultimately realized his lifelong dream. He always said, 'Yes, I dream a lot, but the key is to turn dreams into reality.'"

Nearly four decades later, Dean Spanos is building on his late father's legacy. The Chargers reached the Super Bowl in his first year as team president, claimed five AFC West titles in the first decade of this millennium, posted the AFC's best record a year after returning to Los Angeles, and are now positioned for long-term success in the nation's second-largest media market.

"I think when you consider what we've done recently – drafting Offensive Rookie of the Year Justin Herbert, hiring head coach Brandon Staley, the new marks and uniforms, and opening SoFi Stadium, it's all a new look," Spanos earnestly explains. "It's fresh. It's fun. It's exciting.

"And while all those things are important, what's most important is that we continue to instill a sense of family here. We want everybody to feel that they are an important part of this organization. And once you're part of it, you're always part of it. When you see legends like Antonio Gates, Dan Fouts, and LaDainian Tomlinson come back and work with us, you see all the alums who do community appearances and come to our events, that's what it's all about. That's what we want our current players to see. You're family. And not just today. Always."

Spanos' leadership extends all the way to Park Avenue and the league office. A member of the NFL's Management Council Executive Committee for more than a decade, Spanos has helped negotiate the past two labor agreements – bringing an unprecedented era of stability to the league. Spanos also serves on the NFL Legislative Committee and previously was a member of the NFL Business Ventures Committee, where he was chairman in 2015.

For all he's done at the league level and to position his family's franchise for sustained success on the football and business sides of the operation, Spanos feels the most important work is continuing his father's legacy of making a true impact in the community.

In 1995, Spanos' parents – Alex and his late mother, Faye – created the Chargers Impact Fund with a granular focus on improving the circumstances of families and their respective communities, something driven by the pair's firmly held belief that a solid family foundation is critical to life's success.

Through the Chargers Impact Fund, which complements the team's various community initiatives, Spanos has made it his mission to build on what his parents started – over the years, the Fund has awarded more than $12 million in direct community assistance, including more than $6 million to public schools for badly needed physical fitness, nutrition and athletic programs, and equipment.

"Our focus has always been on youth, education, and helping the less fortunate – all so important to Mom and Dad," reflects the 71-year-old Spanos as his voice slightly cracks at the memory of his parents, who both passed away in 2018. "It's largely this commitment to philanthropy and the platform the NFL provides that drove their desire for the Chargers to be passed down from generation to generation within our family. My dad came from humble beginnings. His belief was that we can't give back to the community enough. We're part of this community, and anything we can do to help is a small way to say thank you."

While the Chargers are indeed a family business, Spanos and his family always have understood that NFL teams are much more – they are, in fact, a public trust.

Never was this more apparent than in Spanos' response to the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020. Immediately realizing food insecurity would be a crippling byproduct of the shutdown, he donated $250,000 to the Los Angeles Regional Food Bank to ensure hunger relief services would continue uninterrupted for vulnerable Angelenos. The impact radiated

Courtesy of the Los Angeles Chargers

BY CREATING A DYNAMIC PRODUCT ON THE FIELD AND CULTIVATING A THRIVING COMMUNITY OFF IT, CHARGERS OWNER AND CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD DEAN SPANOS CONTINUES A FAMILY LEGACY.

BY HAYLEY ELWOOD

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G Members of the Spanos family attended the 2021 NFL Draft at the Chargers' draft headquarters. **G** Spanos congratulates quarterback Justin Herbert after a Chargers victory. Herbert was the AFC's 2020 Offensive Rookie of the Year. **G** Spanos meets with youth football players. Community outreach has been important to Spanos and the Chargers, who were recognized in 2018 as Red Cross L.A.'s Humanitarian Organization of the Year.

throughout the entirety of Southern California as Spanos made two additional monetary contributions to the Second Harvest Food Bank of Orange County and the Jacobs & Cushman San Diego Food Bank.

The Chargers also partnered with KCBS and iHeart Radio to co-host a fundraiser that netted more than $1.65 million in donations for Los Angeles Unified School District students, providing those in need with meals, supplies, and technology necessary to continue their remote studies.

"The last two years were a really difficult situation for the entire world," says Spanos. "Here in Southern California, you saw the devastating impact COVID-19 had on the community. There was so much uncertainty – it was frightening.

"Our stance was, 'Look, anything we can do to help ease that pain, let's do it.' We're fortunate to have been able to continue our business through the pandemic, so we want to make sure we're showing our appreciation to people not just in tough spots, but also to the people on the frontlines."

Beyond the pandemic, Spanos has directly impacted Los Angeles youth in recent years through targeted philanthropic contributions, among them a major donation to establish new teen centers and enhance the athletic fields at the Boys & Girls Club of Metro Los Angeles and a seven-figure commitment to fund the expansion of L.A.'s Summer Night Lights program.

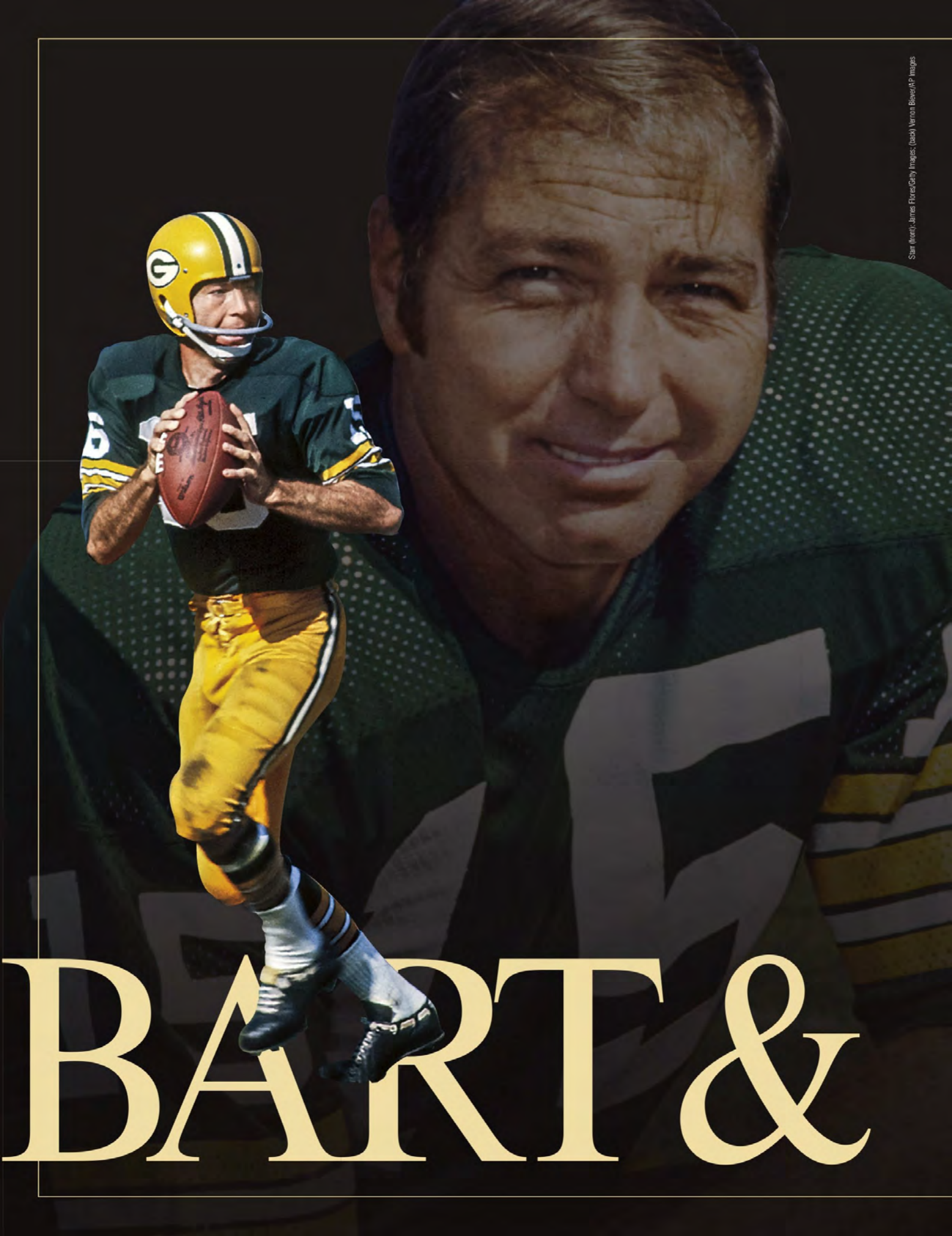
Honored as Red Cross L.A.'s Humanitarian Organization of the Year in 2018 following a quarter-million dollar donation to the American Red Cross after disastrous wildfires struck Southern California – less than three months after committing $500,000 to Hurricane Harvey Relief – the Chargers have carried on Alex Spanos' vision for how an NFL team should operate away from the field.

Back on the field, with the Super Bowl heading to Los Angeles for the first time in nearly three decades, Spanos pauses for a moment to reflect on the fact that one of sports' most iconic events will unfold mere months from now in his own backyard.

"What an opportunity. To hold the Super Bowl at SoFi Stadium – a facility that is going to redefine Los Angeles and the City of Inglewood for the next century and beyond – and showcase it on the world stage? Then to be able to help play host to something, for the fourth time now, that will do so much good for our community? I'm not sure I could have imagined that in my wildest dreams.

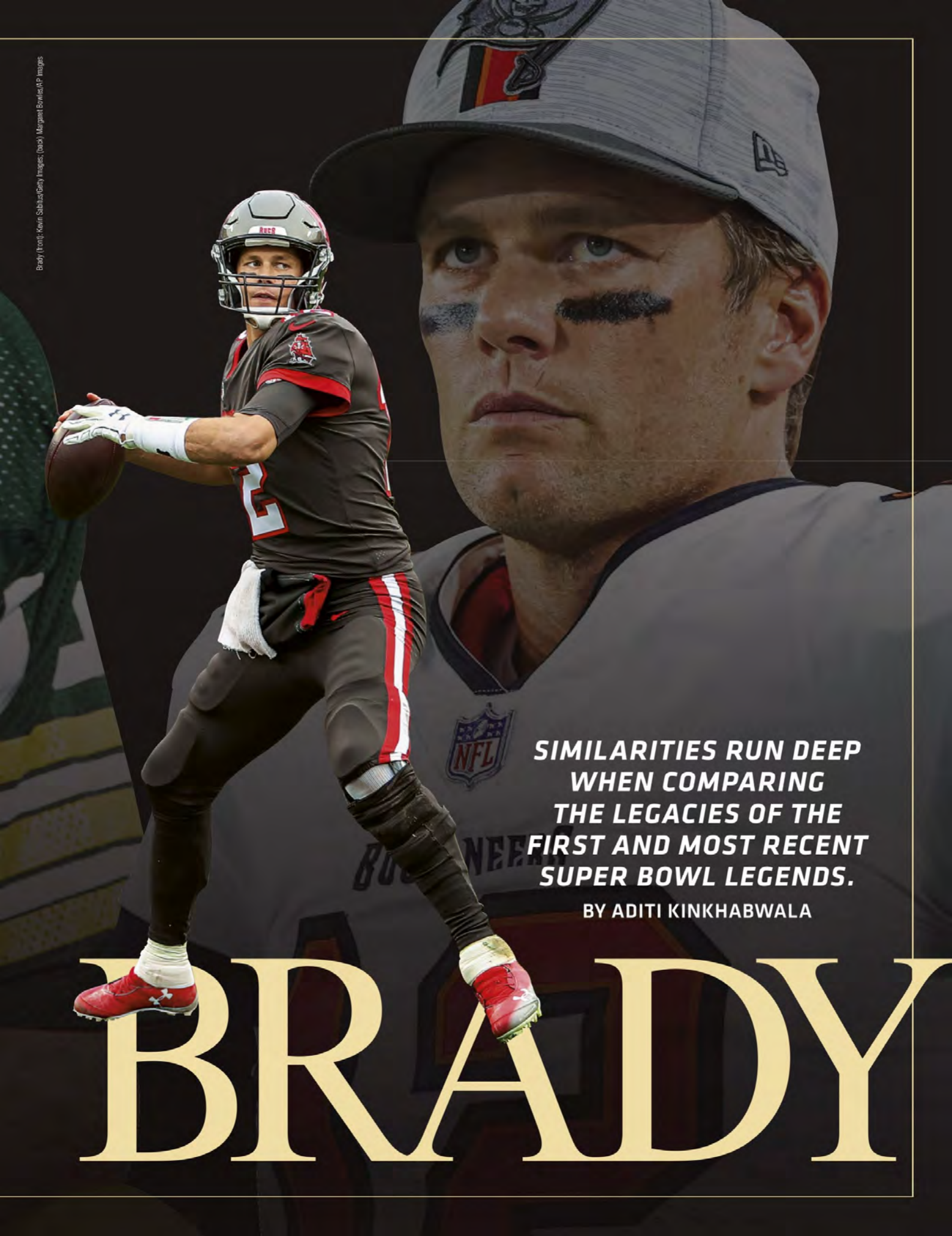
"But hey, it is Hollywood, right?"

__Hayley Elwood__ has worked in the NFL since 2014 and is currently the team reporter for the Los Angeles Chargers.



Starr (front): James Flores/Getty Images; (back) Vernon Biever/AP Images

BART &



Brady (front): Kevin Sabitus/Getty Images; (back) Margaret Bowles/AP Images

SIMILARITIES RUN DEEP WHEN COMPARING THE LEGACIES OF THE FIRST AND MOST RECENT SUPER BOWL LEGENDS.

BY ADITI KINKHABWALA

BRADY

Getty Images

Before Tom Brady, there was Bart Starr.

Before Tom Brady was racking up more rings than any football player ever (seven and counting), there was Bart Starr, winning five NFL titles in seven years.

Before Tom Brady was setting most every postseason passing record, there was Bart Starr, setting – and still holding – the all-time postseason passer rating.

Before Tom Brady was epitomizing greatness and leadership at the quarterback position, there was Bart Starr, the consummate extension of his coach on the football field.

Starr never had the esteem in life Brady did (Starr's head coach tried to trade him!), and he certainly wasn't the athlete Brady is (even if part of Brady's lore is to underplay that athleticism). But the pair do actually share an absurd number of parallels: champion signal-callers who initially opened their careers with modest expectations and who ultimately redefined their position and their franchises.

"On all the intangibles, the mental toughness, the commitment, the play-calling, the stability, the grit – they were the same," says Cliff Christl, the Packers' historian. Christl is the author of *The Greatest Story in Sports*, a definitive history of the Packers organization, and for him, ticking off similarities between the first Super Bowl hero and the latest is easy.

"THE MENTAL TOUGHNESS, THE COMMITMENT, THE PLAY-CALLING, THE STABILITY, THE GRIT – THEY WERE THE SAME."

– CLIFF CHRISTL, PACKERS HISTORIAN

Steven Senne/AP Images

Bart Starr won five NFL titles over a seven-year stretch and was the Most Valuable Player of the first two Super Bowls. Tom Brady's 10 Super Bowl appearances and seven rings are the most of any player in history.

Unyielding composure? Check for Starr, check for Brady.

Incomparable mental fortitude? Check, check.

Ability to take hits? Check, check.

Ability to pick apart defenses, exploit weaknesses, and find multiple ways to beat an opponent? Check and check.

"They also both had to fully subjugate who they were and defer to the head coach," Tom Curran, of NBC Sports Boston, says. Curran has covered the Patriots since 1997, three years before Brady's arrival, and as he sees it, both Starr and Brady had to be "not just subservient, but almost embodiments of their head coach."

Their similar lack of a fancy draft pedigree likely played a role in that.

Starr was the 200th overall selection in 1956. He remains the lowest-picked quarterback in the Hall of Fame – Warren Moon and Kurt Warner were undrafted free agents – and it took years for him to take hold as the Packers' quarterback. First, he was a backup to Tobin Rote, then he split time with Babe Parilli.

In 1959, Vince Lombardi's first year as head coach, Lamar McHan started the first seven games, going 3-4. Christl said when McHan got hurt in that seventh game, it was Joel Francis who was put in before Starr, with Starr not getting his first shot until a mid-November contest against the Colts. But even then, when the Packers needed a heave

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Selected 200th overall in the 1956 NFL Draft, Starr didn't become the Packers' full-time starter until 1961, when he led them to the NFL title.

Wire Images

downfield in that game, Lombardi pulled him for Parilli, who had more arm strength.

In the end, Lombardi did finally turn to Starr because of the way he called plays, Christl said. His preparation, his ability to execute Lombardi's game plan to the last footnote, and his audibling at the line of scrimmage were all superior to any other quarterback on the roster. And there's a very similar thread there to how Curran remembered Brady's ascension to the starting spot in New England, after being the 199th overall pick in the 2000 draft.

Brady spent his rookie season as the fourth-string quarterback on the Patriots' roster, behind Drew Bledsoe, John Friesz, and Michael Bishop. The next year, Brady beat out Damon Huard to be Bledsoe's backup, and Curran said the thing that still sticks with him about that decision was Patriots coach Bill Belichick saying before Brady's first-ever start – Week Three of 2001 following an injury to Bledsoe – something to the effect of: "Look, I just don't think I'm going to be standing here every week talking about all the mistakes Tom Brady made."

"I think Brady was the perfect player for Belichick to mold. Like Starr, he wasn't a first- or second-round pick who was a highly accomplished college athlete coming in with an ego," Curran says. "A lot of what the Patriots did back then was centered around those old Packers principles: the run game, the defense, and the quarterback being told to just do no harm.

"The coach basically said, 'You carry the entire organization in your hands on the field, you're an extension of me,' and that was very, very true for Brady until 2006."

Neither Starr nor Brady had some long-storied tradition to maintain at their installation as starters, or even exalted shoes to fill. The Packers, as Christl says, "were perpetually on their deathbed from the day they were born in 1919." From the time Curly Lambeau retired in 1949 to Lombardi's arrival a decade later, the Packers ran through three coaches and were marked by, Christl says, "bad football and terrible mismanagement." After Starr, they truly fit the moniker of "Titletown."

Similarly, the Patriots nearly left New England for St. Louis in 1993 after cycling through multiple owners. Robert Kraft, who owned Foxboro Stadium, was the one who bought the team and kept them in town, but the shopping and retail empire that currently lives outside Gillette Stadium in Foxborough is indeed thanks to Brady. And before Brady, Curran says it was no stretch to say, "the Patriots were generally recognized as the worst team in the NFL."

That they saved their franchises when looking at the entirety of their careers comes as little surprise. But their paths, similarly unexciting at the start, are more telling.

Starr played with 12 other future Hall of Famers. He never had to carry his team; the Packers were a power running outfit. And while he won three straight NFL championships from 1965-67 (Green Bay is the lone team to achieve that feat in the playoff era), Starr was MVP only in 1966 and didn't even make the Pro Bowl in the other two years.

Brady, meanwhile carried the baggage of being a recipient of Belichick's genius, more than his own, through multiple titles. He was initially viewed as a game manager and also the beneficiary of a great defense. Brady started shedding that, as Curran said, in the mid-2000s, and with his latest championship in Super Bowl LV, his first at the helm of the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, he is universally acclaimed as the greatest quarterback and champion to have played the game. And yet, there are still some who offer knocks.

Like Starr, Brady has never been considered a tremendous natural athlete. His less-than-svelte shirtless photo from the Scouting Combine makes the rounds annually as a source of amusement and, perhaps more recently, as a reminder of possibility.

From the time he was drafted in 2000 through today, Brady has been universally recognized as a tireless worker. He's improved his throwing mechanics, and even late in his career, he's remained on the practice field long after practice – drilling things he can do in his sleep. One-time Patriots vice president of player personnel Scott Pioli has often told the story of seeing a young Brady, working alone in the team's practice bubble, throwing balls into a net on a Friday night in April.

Curran thinks the downplaying of Brady's physical attributes is a little overstated; after all, Brady was a solid-hitting catcher drafted at age 17 by Major League Baseball's Montreal Expos.

"People spend too much time fixating on his foot speed and build, and miss how strong his arm is," Curran says. "Also, I think his durability and his toughness are both physical traits."

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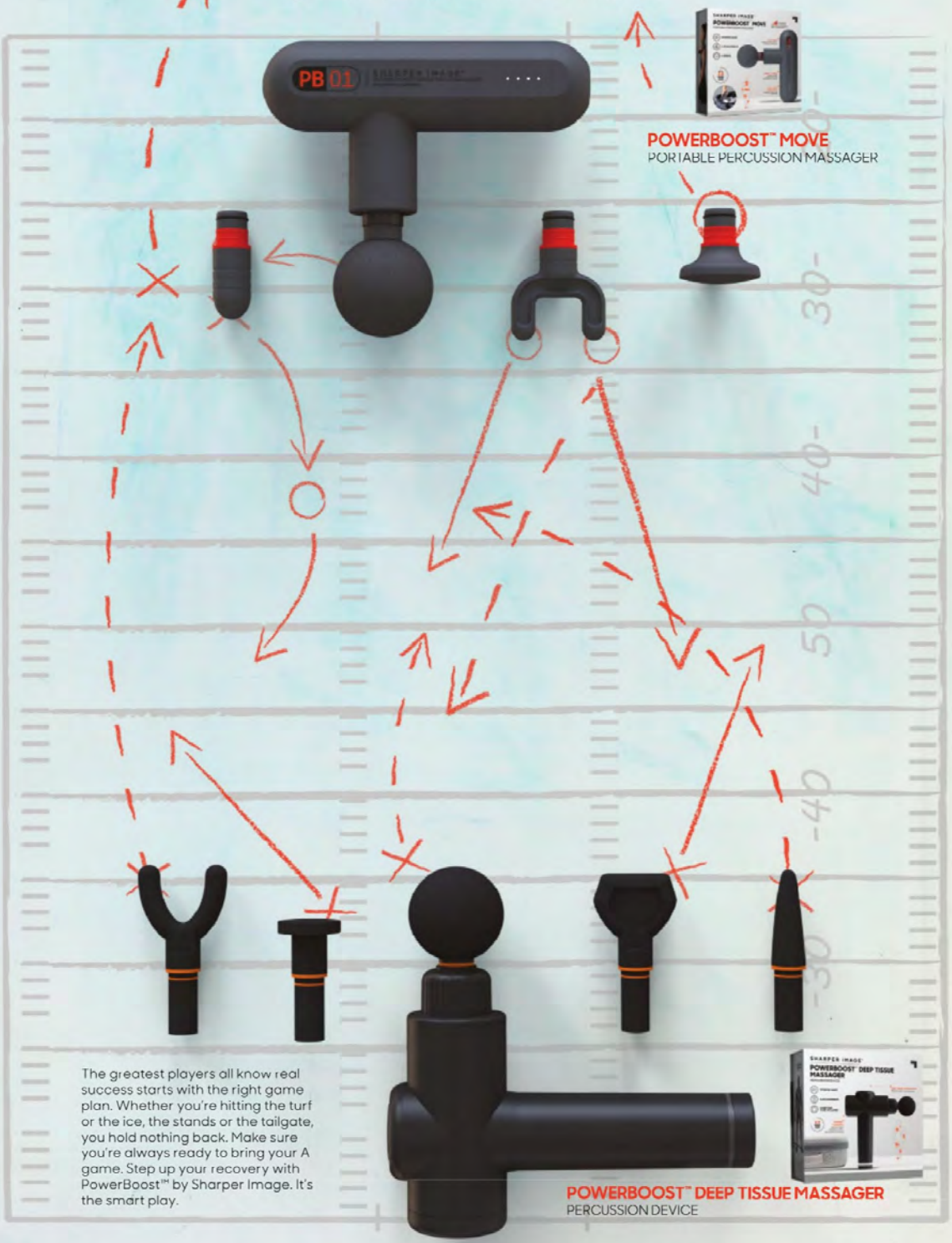

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Brady (12) and Rob Gronkowski have been teammates on four Super Bowl champions, including last season with the Buccaneers.

But even having said that, Curran acknowledges, "Nothing about Brady physically makes your jaw drop. Which is like Starr."

It had been a college basketball coach who suggested the drafting of Starr to the Packers, but Lombardi never seemed fully sold on Starr as an athlete. Lombardi repeatedly and publicly called Paul Hornung the greatest player he'd ever coached, and he bemoaned the loss of Hornung – even as Starr was guiding the Packers to championships in the mid-1960s.

There had been rumblings at the time that Lombardi coveted Don Meredith, and tried trading for the Cowboys' star quarterback. In researching his book, Christl spoke to Jack Koeppler, who sat on the Packers' board of directors and was a longtime friend of Lombardi's. Koeppler told Christl that while he didn't remember if it was precisely after the 1964 or '65 season, there was one summer when Lombardi called Cowboys general manager Tex Schramm multiple times a day trying to get a deal for Meredith done.

"He wasn't convinced that he could win all the way through with Bart," Koeppler told Christl.

Brady and Belichick, of course, famously parted ways after the 2019 season, but there was never any sense, anywhere, that Belichick thought he could do better with a different quarterback – even considering Brady's age. But just as with Starr and Lombardi, there long has been a fascination on the inner workings of their coach-player relationship.

Of course, the greatest parallel between Starr and Brady may just be their mutual mastery of the mental aspect of the game. Both are widely acclaimed for their instinctiveness, for their ability to see the field, and their understanding of what their team – and head coach – was trying to do. The late Sid Gillman, a Hall of Fame coach whose offenses were the most innovative of his day, once dubbed Starr the "Father of the Modern Passing Game" for his play-calling and ability to audible at the line of scrimmage.

But even beyond that, it's the mental toughness that set both Starr and Brady apart from their peers. Brady himself has attributed coming back from 25 points down in Super Bowl LI to that toughness and his attitude, and he's long credited both with making the difference in key moments more so than his ability to throw any specific pass. It's not a stretch to think he could be 10-0 in Super Bowls.

Starr was the image of perseverance, Christl says, passed over for the Pro Bowl and never seen as the singular star, even as he "was no question the leader on the field, in command of the huddle, and the guy who knew exactly what play to call." He went 9-1 in the postseason.

As the years have passed, offenses have changed, as have expectations of quarterbacks. But the one consistency has been the key traits Starr and Brady shared, and how they have led to the title of ultimate winner.

Some things, after all, are timeless.

Aditi Kinkhabwala *has been a national correspondent at NFL Network since 2012. She also appears on CBS'* We Need To Talk, *hosts the "NFL Explained" podcast, and is a regular co-host on both SiriusXM NFL radio and local Pittsburgh radio.*

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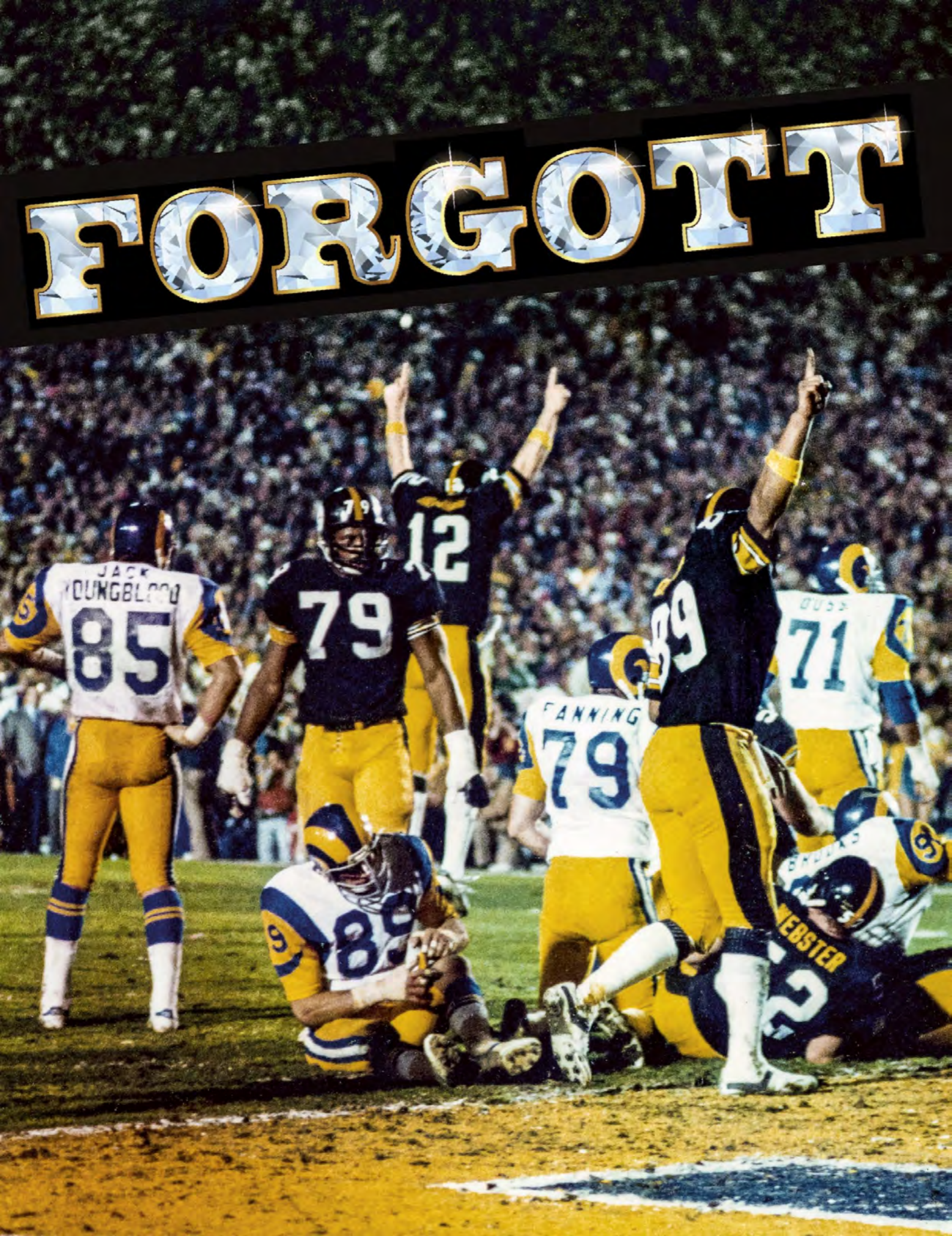
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SOMETIMES BURIED IN THE ANNALS OF HISTORY, A FRESH LOOK AT SUPER BOWL XIV UNCOVERS ONE OF THE GAME'S MOST COMPELLING AND COMPETITIVE MATCHUPS.

BY JAY PARIS

The Steelers celebrate Franco Harris' 1-yard TD run late in Super Bowl XIV. After the underdog Rams carried a 19-17 lead into the fourth quarter, Pittsburgh scored twice to secure its fourth Super Bowl title in six seasons.

Robert Riger/Getty Images

The backdrop was Hollywood, the main characters could brighten a red carpet, and the contest remained a cliffhanger until the closing scene.

Yet, with all that working in its favor, why does Super Bowl XIV often end up on the cutting room floor when critics rank the best Super Bowls? It's a good question because when depositing all the dramatic twists, side stories, and subplots into a blender, those ingredients would – and did – deliver an epic Super Bowl.

The Pittsburgh Steelers, already crowned the NFL's "team of the '70s," were aiming for their fourth title in six years, while the resourceful Los Angeles Rams were all but sneaking into the game like a gatecrasher with bogus tickets. Despite a perceived mismatch, the game produced a Super Bowl-record seven lead changes – and it was the underdog Rams that held the upper hand as the fourth quarter commenced.

And while Pittsburgh's "Steel Curtain" defense was revered for its toughness, there may have never been a gutsier performance in Super Bowl history than that of Rams defensive end Jack Youngblood, who played the game on a broken leg.

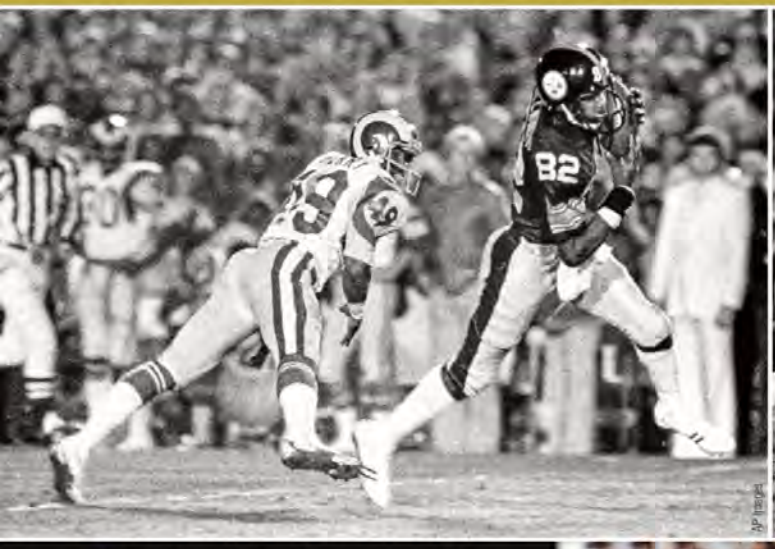
Some sensed this might be the Steelers' final dance. Defensive tackle "Mean" Joe Greene, defensive ends L.C. Greenwood and Dwight White, and cornerback Mel Blount were all on the wrong side of 30. Quarterback Terry Bradshaw was in his 10th year and punishing running back Franco Harris, his eighth.

"We realized that was the last go-around," linebacker Jack Ham says.

"We were tired," Bradshaw adds.

Still, the fact that the Steelers advanced to the Super Bowl was as shocking as their fans waving Terrible Towels. This Chuck Noll-coached team had enough future Hall of Famers to fill a wing in Canton and played with a confidence and swagger that few could match. They went an NFL-best 12-4, ran over the Miami Dolphins and Houston Oilers in the AFC playoffs, and viewed the Rams as a small speed bump as they sped across the finish line to another championship.

And the Rams? They cobbled together a 9-7 record under first-time head coach Ray Malavasi and didn't climb two games over .500 until December, after Vince Ferragamo became the team's third starting quarterback of the season. In the NFC playoffs, they eliminated the Dallas Cowboys on a deflected 50-yard scoring pass with two minutes to



AP Images

John Stallworth (82) heads to the end zone with a 73-yard fourth-quarter touchdown reception that put the Steelers back in front of the Rams. It marked the last of a Super Bowl-record seven lead changes on the day.

AP Photo

Steelers linebacker Jack Lambert (58) snares an interception in front of receiver Ron Smith (84) midway through the fourth quarter, stopping a Rams drive for a potential go-ahead score.

Heinz Kluetmeier/Getty Images

Terry Bradshaw earned Super Bowl MVP honors for the second time after completing 14 of 21 passes for 309 yards and a pair of TDs in the 31-19 victory.

play and then beat the three-years-removed-from-expansion Tampa Bay Buccaneers without scoring a touchdown.

"We had some problems early that year," reflects Rams safety Nolan Cromwell. "[But there] was no question in our minds that we were going to win the Super Bowl."

The plucky Rams, who led 13-10 at halftime and 19-17 in the fourth quarter, nearly did just that.

While Super Bowl XIV began with the Steelers intent on becoming the first NFL team to win four Super Bowls, Rams guard Dennis Harrah was motivated to impress everyone with his ride.

The free-spirited Harrah rented a Rolls-Royce, but it didn't come with the most important item when driving to a game in Southern California. Especially one that would attract a Super Bowl-record crowd of 103,985 to the Rose Bowl.

"I was worried more about getting a parking pass than fighting 'Mean' Joe Greene," Harrah says. "I was young and not very smart at the time."

Bradshaw, meanwhile, was a Super Bowl veteran, but his mind was also elsewhere beforehand. After the Steelers met with the media at the Newport Beach Marriott during Super Bowl week, Bradshaw committed a costly fumble. As he exited, he dropped an envelope crammed with 16 Super Bowl tickets. By the time Bradshaw checked his pockets and then his blindside, the pricey ducats were sacked.

The keen money was on the Steelers to make quick work of the Rams, a 12-point underdog, even if L.A. was playing close to home. The Pittsburgh Pirates had won the World Series three months earlier, and with series MVP Willie Stargell chatting with Bradshaw just before kickoff, the Steelers were primed to follow the Bucs' championship lead.

If there was any concern on the Pittsburgh side, it was that three Rams assistants – defensive coordinator Bud Carson, offensive line coach Dan Radakovich, and receivers coach Lionel Taylor – were former Steelers coaches. That led to some improvisation, including Bradshaw calling plays at the line.

It didn't seem too much of an issue early on. After their defense forced a three-and-out on the opening possession, the Steelers' offense started on the right foot when Matt Bahr connected on a 41-yard field goal. But in what would be a tit-for-tat contest, the Rams answered with Cullen Bryant's 1-yard touchdown run, which was set up by Wendell Tyler's 39-yard scamper.

Tyler, a decorated player from UCLA, was noted for his shifty moves and occasional lack of ball security. That Tyler never fumbled during Super Bowl XIV, and Bradshaw did before it, was a clue of the zaniness in store.

Pittsburgh regained the lead, 10-7, early in the second quarter when Harris scored from one yard out. Still. the Rams continued to move the ball, tying the game and then moving in front just before the end of the first half via two Frank Corral field goals. With a 13-10 cushion and the roar of a friendly crowd behind them, the Rams were convincing themselves – and millions of others – that they were more than a pesky distraction impeding the main act.

Up With People entertained at halftime with a "Salute to the Swing Era" that might have sounded dated to some fans. As the Steelers returned to the field, there was a growing sense that their run of greatness may

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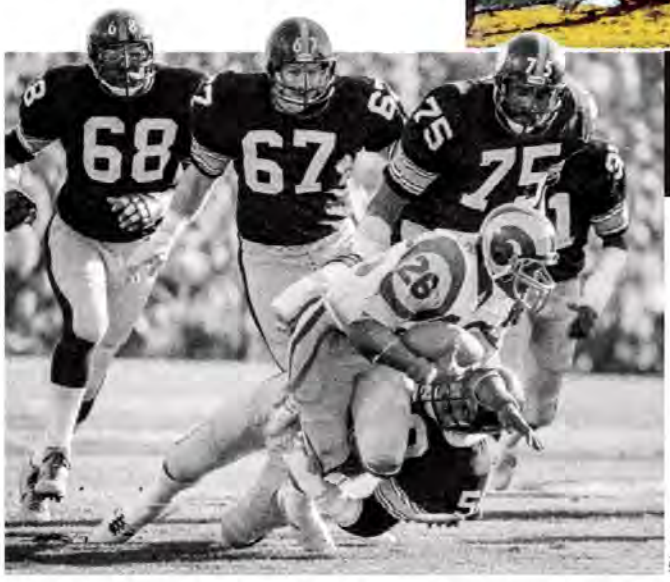
have reached its expiration date, too. Then, as if on cue, one of their stars seized the spotlight.

Wide receiver Lynn Swann was the golden boy of Pittsburgh's gritty and physical offense, and before that, a can't-miss pro prospect at the University of Southern California. He also was a stellar body-bending receiver and proved it with an acrobatic 47-yard TD reception to put the Steelers ahead, 17-13. Despite being covered by cornerback Pat Thomas and Cromwell, Swann twisted his frame for a leaping catch. (Thomas would later sideline Swann with a hit following another third-quarter reception.)

Robert Riger/Getty Images



AP Images

Lawrence McCutcheon (30) makes the call after Cullen Bryant's 1-yard touchdown run gave the Rams an early lead in Super Bowl XIV. McCutcheon would later throw a scoring pass to put his team back in front in the third quarter. Pittsburgh's "Steel Curtain" defense – with linebacker Jack Lambert (shown tackling the Rams' Wendell Tyler), L.C. Greenwood (68), Gary Dunn (67), and "Mean" Joe Greene (75) – delivered in the game's key moments.

For the third time in the game, the Rams answered a Steelers score with one of their own. But this touchdown pass didn't come from Ferragamo, a local Banning High star who was once named the top prep player in Los Angeles. Instead, he pitched the ball to running back Lawrence McCutcheon, who heaved it to wide receiver Ron Smith for a shocking 24-yard TD reception.

The Rams, giddy over regaining the lead at 19-17, barely blinked when Corral misfired on the extra point.

The wobbly Steelers weren't at Three Rivers Stadium, but they did appear to be up a creek. Their running game was stalled, Swann was hurt, and Bradshaw was intercepted on the team's next two possessions, first by safety Eddie Brown and then by cornerback Rod Perry. The Rams entered the fourth quarter with the ball and a two-point lead.

Even after forcing a punt, the Steelers remained in a rut, facing a third-and-8 from their own 27-yard line. In "Pittsburghese," it was time for 60-Prevent-Slot-Hook-And-Go.

"I never liked that play," admits wide receiver John Stallworth, who stepped up after Swann was sidelined. "Neither did Bradshaw. When we tried it in practice, it never worked."

Against the Rams – with the season at stake – it was pristine.

Perry had underneath coverage on Stallworth, with Brown providing protection over the top. Except midway through Stallworth's route, Brown quit tracking him.

That left Perry alone guarding Stallworth. Bradshaw heaved a pass that pierced a sky that had turned from burnt orange to darkness, and it was a leaping Perry's near miss of interrupting that 73-yard throw that flipped Super Bowl XIV. Stallworth brought the football to his chest as the heartbroken Rams saw the scoreboard pronounce the Steelers' 24-19 edge.

"I really thought I was going to intercept that pass," Perry says. "If I would have intercepted it, it would have been a different game. You had Stallworth catching the ball, and Bradshaw putting just the right amount of arch on it to get it over me. Those are two Hall of Famers making an unbelievable play."

The Rams were stunned, but not done. Midway through the final frame, they marched to the Steelers 32-yard line before Ferragamo made his first key mistake. His sight lines took him to Smith, instead of an open Billy Waddy, and linebacker Jack Lambert was reading Ferragamo's eyes. Lambert snagged the pass at the 14 for an interception.

Stallworth's 45-yard catch on the ensuing possession set up a Harris TD run after the two-minute warning, making the final margin a somewhat misleading 31-19. Bradshaw, who completed 14 of 21 passes for 309 yards and two TDs, earned his second Super Bowl MVP.

Pittsburgh survived a hard-fought Super Bowl for not only its fourth title, but also its legacy. Los Angeles fought for respect, and in doing so, almost captured the Vince Lombardi Trophy on its first attempt.

That week's *Sports Illustrated* cover blared, "This one was really Super." And that's the truth, even if history doesn't always remember it that way.

***Jay Paris** has covered the NFL since 1992. He is the author of* Game Of My Life Rams *and* Game Of My Life Chargers, *and is a forbes.com correspondent. Paris attended Super Bowl XIV as a spectator, and despite covering 24 additional Super Bowls, it remains his favorite.*

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GAME CHANGERS

FROM THE FIELD TO FRONT OFFICES, AND ALL THE WAY TO SUPER BOWL SUNDAY, WOMEN ARE MAKING THEIR MARK ON THE GAME.

BY CHAREAN WILLIAMS

Amy Trask remembers her first NFL owners meeting like it was yesterday, even though it was more than 30 years ago. Raiders owner Al Davis hired Trask as his advisor and negotiator in 1987 after she worked with the team as a legal intern while attending the University of Southern California's Gould School of Law followed by a stint at a Los Angeles law firm.

As Trask was pouring herself a cup of coffee, a team owner asked her to pour him a cup.

"I looked around and realized I was the only woman in the room who wasn't part of the catering staff, so I made a very quick decision to handle it in a manner I thought would be fun," Trask remembers. "I knew that within moments, the meeting would start; the catering staff would leave; we would all be asked to take our seats; and he would see me walk in and sit down at the table. I said, 'Sure, how do you take your coffee?'

"A couple of minutes later, the meeting was called to order, and I walked over to sit down next to Al. You could just see the blood drain from this team owner's face when he looked at me and realized I was sitting down. I looked at him, and I just started giggling, and he started laughing. I will tell you, for the next almost 30 years, every single meeting that we attended together, he walked up to me and said, 'How would you like your coffee? I will go get it.'"

We've come a long way, baby.

In 1929, Kathleen Rubadue became the first woman to work in the league when NFL president Joe Carr hired her as his secretary. Last year, 38.8% of employees in the league office were women, according to Statista.

Women also now are owners, front office executives, coaches, scouts, officials, athletic trainers, public relations directors, and beat writers. Their numbers are in the dozens, if not hundreds, and it's becoming more about who's next than who's first.

"We love progress," Charlotte Jones, an executive vice president and chief brand officer for the Cowboys, says. "It's usually never as fast as we want, but at least we're going in the right direction. These women are in there doing it, and they are being heard. It's one thing to put them in the room. It's another thing to listen to what they're saying.

"The great thing about it is, like in any business, there has to be a pipeline, and we are getting that. I applaud everybody at the league who has worked hard to do this, and I applaud the open-mindedness of the institution. I think the league has done a good job getting that connection point and breaking barriers, and these women aren't in these jobs just to be in these jobs. They're having success in these jobs."

Samantha Rapoport is a big reason for the revolution. She interned with the NFL in 2003 and had a stint with USA Football before the league hired her full time in football operations 13 years later. She oversees the league's efforts in enfranchising women in male-dominated roles on the football side.

When Rapoport started as NFL director of football development, Sarah Thomas already was in the officials' pipeline; Jen Welter had become the first female coach when she interned for the Cardinals; Kathyrn Smith was

Lori Locust, an assistant defensive line coach with the Buccaneers, attended the NFL's inaugural Women's Careers in Football Forum in 2017.

Douglas P. DeFelice/Getty Images

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the first full-time assistant NFL coach with the Bills; and Kelly Kleine was scouting for the Vikings. Other than that, however, it was "pretty much zeros across the board," Rapoport recalls.

"We obviously said this isn't good enough, and we're not considering half the population in our hiring practices on the football side," she says. "We wanted to change that, so we created this program called the NFL Women's Careers in Football Forum. The idea was: We know there are thousands of women in this country who are ready, qualified, and want to work in football. They just don't have the same connections and the same experiences to get those opportunities."

The league annually scours the country for 40 women with experience working in football operations roles, and those women spend two days with NFL owners, coaches, and general managers. The forum has created 176 opportunities for women in football roles since its inception, including 75 in college football. Twenty-three NFL teams have hired women directly from the forum.

"It's always about broadening that pipeline," Rapoport says.

The NFL had a record 12 female coaches and 12 female full-time scouts this season. More history was made when the Broncos hired Kleine as executive director of football operations/special advisor to the general manager, and the Washington Football Team promoted Jennifer King from coaching intern to assistant running backs coach, making her the league's first full-time Black female coach.

In 2019, Katie Sowers, the NFL's first openly gay coach, became the first woman to coach in a Super Bowl. She spent four seasons as an offensive assistant with the 49ers and was on the sideline when they played the Chiefs in Super Bowl LIV.

During last season's COVID-19 pandemic, Browns chief of staff Callie Brownson became the first woman to serve as a primary position coach during a game. In Super Bowl LV, Lori Locust and Maral Javadifar were on the coaching staff of the Buccaneers, and Thomas became the first woman to officiate the league's title game when she served as the down judge.

Locust attended the first Women's Careers in Football Forum in 2017, handed Rapoport

Greg Nelson/Getty Images

"THESE WOMEN ARE IN THERE DOING IT, AND THEY ARE BEING HEARD. IT'S ONE THING TO PUT THEM IN THE ROOM. IT'S ANOTHER THING TO LISTEN TO WHAT THEY'RE SAYING.

–CHARLOTTE JONES

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1 Dallas Cowboys executive vice president Charlotte Jones chats with her father/team owner Jerry Jones (left) and NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell. 2 Sarah Thomas (left) became the first woman to officiate a Super Bowl when she was the down judge at Super Bowl LV. Samantha Rapoport (right) is the NFL's senior director of diversity, equity and inclusion. 3 Amy Trask was the Raiders' CEO from 1987-2013.

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her résumé, explained her aspirations, and earned an internship with the Ravens for training camp in 2018. The Bucs made her a full-time assistant defensive line coach a year later.

Buccaneers head coach Bruce Arians hired Welter when he was in Arizona, and has hired Locust and Javadifar, an assistant strength and conditioning coach, in Tampa Bay.

"It's very important for me," Arians says. "I don't know why. I just know that I feel it. I think probably not getting an opportunity myself until I was 60, and Chuck (Pagano) getting cancer for me to even get a chance to be a head coach. I want opportunities for people who deserve it. I knew a female football coach way back – Dot Murphy – so I knew women could coach. That's not a problem, because they can teach. It's just a matter of giving them the opportunity and knocking that door down."

Locust and Javadifar look different than the other coaches on the Tampa Bay staff, but players look at them the same as any other coach with the team. The women have earned the respect of everyone in the locker room.

"I've been doing this so long, and I've never approached it gender-forward," Locust says. "I know who I am, and if I dress a certain way, you'll know who I am. But I just really try to make it football-forward. I'm not canceling the fact I'm a woman. I know how much of an example that needs to be, and I know how important that messaging is, but that's never been my first thought. Everything I do, I approach like any other coach would, like I've been taught.

"People just don't understand the women who are here now, or are in any profession that has been the singular in a male-prevalent career, we didn't just spring up from the ground. No one waved a magic wand and, all of sudden, we're there. We've put in the work. We paid our dues. We did all of the stuff that everybody else has done, and guess what? We earned it."

The Bucs organization has sought to be "fundamentally inclusive," says Darcie Glazer Kassewitz, the owner/president of the Tampa Bay Buccaneers Foundation and the Glazer Vision Foundation.

More than half the coaches on Arians' staff are minorities. In 2020, Tampa Bay became the first team in Super Bowl history to reach the title game with three Black coordinators. The Bucs, who were also the first NFL team to build a locker room for their female coaches, have held the door open for minority and female coaches. While lifting them up, they also lifted a Lombardi Trophy.

Alex Brandon/AP Images

Dana Burkhart/AP Images

Philadelphia Eagles

Clockwise from top: When the Washington Football Team promoted Jennifer King to assistant running backs coach in January 2021, she became the NFL's first full-time Black female coach. Catherine Raîche is the Eagles' vice president of football operations, with roles that include pro and college scouting, contract management, player/staff development, and football research. Maral Javadifar has been an assistant strength and conditioning coach/physical therapist with the Buccaneers since 2019.

"It was really incredible. It showed the world that this is real and that you can be successful with this level of inclusion, and we hope that it's a great message for everyone," Kassewitz says. "There is no other tangible barrier to progress. It's a very galvanizing time for women in football, and this is just the beginning."

So, who's next? What's next?

"When people ask me, 'Are you going to be the first female head coach in the NFL?,' I don't think that's what you should strive for," says Sowers, who worked for the Chiefs in the offseason and at training camp as part of the Bill Walsh Diversity Fellowship Program. "I think if you want to be a head coach, strive to be a head coach. But if you're saying you want to be the first, that's saying if someone beats you, then you somehow failed. If another woman beats me being a head coach, then we've made progress.

"I don't strive to be the first. I strive to make a difference."

***Charean Williams**, who works for NBC's Pro Football Talk, was the first female selector for the Pro Football Hall of Fame, the first female president of the Pro Football Writers of America, and the first female winner of the Bill Nunn Jr. Award, presented for long and distinguished reporting in the field of pro football.*

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FALCONS
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91
10

ON THE ROAD AGAIN

AFTER A ONE-YEAR HIATUS, THE NFL MADE A BIG RETURN TO GREAT BRITAIN. OTHER INTERNATIONAL DESTINATIONS ARE ALSO ON THE HORIZON.

BY NEIL REYNOLDS

Kyle Pitts (8) catches a touchdown pass during the Falcons' 27-20 win over the Jets at London's Tottenham Hotspur Stadium in October. Atlanta mascot Freddie Falcon holds up a Union flag during the team's game against the Jets.

Steve Luciano/AP Photos

AS FOUR F-15 FIGHTER PLANES ROARED OVER LONDON'S TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR STADIUM in October, Atlanta Falcons quarterback Matt Ryan looked to the skies, nodded his approval, and strapped on his helmet. He was itching to get onto the field to take on the New York Jets.

The former NFL Most Valuable Player and four-time Pro Bowl selection recalls: "That was one of the best flyovers I've ever seen. Those planes were tight to the stadium. The atmosphere was really cool and the whole thing was incredible. That got my juices going before the game."

Ryan's enthusiasm was matched by a passionate and football-starved crowd of more than 60,000, who celebrated the NFL's return to London after a COVID-19-impacted 707-day absence. The Falcons would soar to a victory over the Jets, while on the same field a week later, Matthew Wright kicked two late field goals to lift the Jacksonville Jaguars over the Miami Dolphins in front of a record audience of 60,784.

After 18 months of lockdowns, solitude, and heartbreak, the UK's NFL fans were set free, and they celebrated every pass, catch, and tackle like a Super Bowl-winning moment. Such passion was felt on the field.

Amid a sea of big plays, touchdowns, and late drama, the back-to-back sellout crowds witnessed the 5,000th completion of Ryan's career and the first of what is hoped to be many wins for Jaguars quarterback Trevor Lawrence. Both left London moved by the international experience.

"The fans were super-engaged," Lawrence said afterward. "To get my first win out here, it's special. I love that the Jags play this game, so I'm excited to come back."

Ryan noted: "This is not just another game – it feels different. It's great to expose what is pretty much an American game to different places."

The return of regular-season games to London was also celebrated in league circles.

"It is hard to exaggerate how good it felt. It was logical to cancel the games in 2020, but it was sad. Everyone had to make it through and there were much bigger priorities, but it was important for the league to get back to the market, to serve those fans, and to get the great tradition going again," says former NFL Executive Vice President and Chief Strategy & Growth Officer Chris Halpin, who left his post in January.

"As we started planning the London games, it was a steep hill to climb. But we chipped away and figured it out," notes Halpin. "We had phenomenal weather, exceptional and exciting football, and when you factor in the crowd reaction, it couldn't have been better."

Head of Europe & UK for the NFL, Brett Gosper, adds: "I felt very positive about the London games. It's a stadium filled with connoisseurs. They make all the right noises in the right places. These are big events in London – as big as any on the sporting calendar. This will continue to grow. It will hold a bigger place in the UK's sporting landscape and not a smaller one as time goes on."

With 30 successful regular-season games played in London dating back to 2007, the UK continues to serve as a strong international market for the NFL.

NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell states: "The fans who have supported us and shown their passion have become incredible fans. I like to say that when I go to a game in London, I feel no different than I do in the States, especially at this spectacular stadium in Tottenham."

Such sentiment is shared among NFL owners, including the Falcons' Arthur Blank.

"I spend a lot of time with the other 31 owners, and there is a consensus that London has been a great extension of the NFL. We feel like this is another home for us. Over time, you will see more and more games played here."

But will those games come in the form of a rotation of teams or could London, one day, have its own NFL franchise?

"The thinking has always been that if we build it, they might come," Gosper explains. "You need media who are interested in the sport, and we have that through Sky and the BBC, we have a fan base that is very strong, and we have stadia that can host NFL games. So, I think we've built it.

"The question is, 'Do we need to be making the franchise case a bit more strongly?' We could really model that out to show what it means in media terms, in economic terms, and how it might look in terms of scheduling, time zones, and logistics. We could push toward those possibilities a little bit more rather than waiting for them to happen."

Accelerating the league's overseas efforts is the International Home Marketing Area initiative, which got underway in January. Typically, NFL teams are permitted to market themselves within 75 miles of their own stadium. That's now been expanded to allow them into markets in Mexico, the UK, Canada, Germany, and beyond. In total, 18 teams have been granted access to 26 International Home Marketing Areas across eight different countries.

The New York Jets are one of six teams with marketing rights in the UK, an opportunity team owner Woody Johnson is embracing.

A sellout crowd arrives at Tottenham Hotspur Stadium for October's Falcons-Jets contest. Falcons quarterback Matt Ryan described the pregame flyover as "one of the best I've ever seen. That got my juices going before the game." Fans in Great Britain are proud to wear the jerseys of their favorite NFL teams and players. The league has held regular-season games in London since 2007, with 31 of the NFL's 32 teams making at least one appearance there. The Jaguars lead the way with eight, including this season's victory over the Dolphins.

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"UK fans are as knowledgeable and passionate as any home team fans. In a word, they are 'terrific,'" he says. "The picture is coming into sharp focus. The UK has shown us that there is tremendous interest in the NFL outside the United States. That's exciting. The popularity of the NFL is at an all-time high and we will be welcomed with open arms."

"To have teams market their brands is just a huge accelerant to international marketing," Gosper adds. "It will more than double our international marketing efforts, and that's just in phase one, with more teams coming on board in 2022."

As the NFL cultivates appealing international markets, Mexico remains an obvious favorite. Four regular-season games have been played in Mexico City's Estadio Azteca, most recently in 2019. A return is imminent.

"[The NFL] is definitely getting back there in 2022," Halpin says. "It hurt to miss the game in Mexico for two years. The league loves playing games there. Azteca Stadium is a special place when it's rocking and rolling.

Arkansas State, quarterback George Reynolds to the University of Ottawa, and defensive back Pelayo Martinez to Borregos Salvajes Mexico ITESM. Offensive tackle Freddie Pelling (Akron, Brown, and Western Kentucky), tight end Peter Clarke (Texas-San Antonio), linebacker Kofi Taylor-Barrocks (Michigan State), and defensive end Darren Agu (Vanderbilt) have received Division I offers.

"I'm lucky the NFL Academy came around when it did," says Reynolds. "I was a quarterback who could throw the ball, but I didn't really understand the complexity of situations and how to read defenses. The NFL Academy made me the player I am today where I can step onto the field at a college program and be confident in myself."

The NFL further strengthened its ties with London and the UK in October when the league teamed up with the Greater London Authority to commit £1 million to the NFL Foundation, launched with the aim of tackling inequality and lack of opportunities for young people in society.

The London-based NFL Academy is an important proving ground for international players who want to develop their skills to play in the United States and Canada. Quarterback George Reynolds (left) attends the University of Ottawa, while offensive tackle Freddie Pelling (center) received Division I offers from Akron, Brown, and Western Kentucky.
With its passionate fan base, London will continue to host NFL games on an annual basis. The league also is planning to return to Mexico and hold its first game in Germany.

It's a fantastic football market and there's so much more room to grow."

Among the more exciting international developments is the move toward a regular-season game being played in Germany for the first time. Multiple bids were received to host a game, with Dusseldorf, Frankfurt, and Munich emerging as the finalists. The winning city will be announced at the Super Bowl.

"Germany is a market that, on every metric, is exceptional for the NFL," Gosper stresses. "Right now, it's our number one market for Madden, Fantasy, and NFL GamePass outside of the USA and Canada. It's incredible. We just have so much momentum. We advocated for playing games there and our international committee said, 'Yes, definitely!'"

Such a move will be welcomed by players, as Ryan explains: "Some guys I played with at the beginning of my career talked about what NFL Europe was like, and they said the atmosphere at games in Germany was incredible."

When the NFL inevitably moves into Germany, it will not simply be a case of playing games and then heading back to the United States. The league will look to lay down foundations, with Gosper suggesting, "The UK is a template for Germany."

Football in the United Kingdom is now about so much more than the playing of regular-season games.

The London-based NFL Academy is in its third season of high school football and has recently sent wide receiver Seydou Traore to

Commissioner Goodell says: "In the NFL, we believe in relationships with our communities. We don't come to London to play a single game; we come here to be a part of this community and to give back. The NFL Foundation is our way to give back."

As the NFL gets set to conclude another memorable season across the United States, the international picture remains exciting, ever-expanding, and filled with promise.

Gosper concludes: "I don't think we could ever have imagined the kind of positive reaction to international that we saw at the owners meetings in September, and it's a credit to the state of the NFL and the game itself. The way our media partners position our content, our games, and our players internationally has never been better. The club support has also never been higher – it's been more about unleashing that club support rather than engendering it.

"We're really excited across fan development, media consumption, and football development when you talk about our international players in the league, the NFL Academy, the Combine, and what we're looking to do across Africa and in other markets. We're really excited by the momentum in all three, and we feel like the model has never been better. Now we've just got to keep executing."

***Neil Reynolds** is the anchor of Sky Sports' television coverage of the NFL in the United Kingdom and also writes for NFL.com/UK and SkySports.com/NFL.*

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NAMED IN HONOR OF TWO OF THE SUPER BOWL'S FOUNDING FIGURES, THE LOMBARDI AND ROZELLE TROPHIES SYMBOLIZE THE GAME'S ULTIMATE ACHIEVEMENTS. BY MIKE GARAFOLO

TROPHY TALES

In the lead-up to Super Bowl I, NFL Commissioner Pete Rozelle was eager to drum up publicity for the new AFL-NFL Championship Game, and therefore was pushing for the participating teams to make a weeklong stay amid the glitz and glamour of Los Angeles.

And then there was Vince Lombardi, the old-fashioned, moody coach of the Green Bay Packers, who grumbled about the idea of his players staying seven days in the city dubbed "Tinseltown."

After a phone conversation in which each side presented its case – the coach wanted to stay 400 miles away in Palo Alto, while the commish pushed for a location as close to L.A. as possible – Lombardi and Rozelle agreed the Packers would go to nearby Santa Barbara.

Under one condition Lombardi placed on his players.

"I drove up the Monday or Tuesday before the game with (sportswriter) Jack Murphy. We saw Vince pacing in the lobby of the hotel, and I say, 'What a beautiful place to train a football team,'" recalls longtime *Newark Star-Ledger* columnist Jerry Izenberg. "He said, 'It's a horse(bleep) place, it's a horse(bleep) ocean, and everything about this place is horse(bleep)!'

"All the players are hanging over the railings above, so he looks up, and he says to them, 'I don't want to see anybody in the pool, either!'"

This year, the Super Bowl returns to the Los Angeles area for the eighth time, ending a 29-year drought for a place that was a recurring destination for the NFL's biggest game from 1967-1993.

Lombardi and Rozelle will be present at SoFi Stadium in the form of the two trophies awarded following the game: the Vince Lombardi Trophy to the winning team, and the Pete Rozelle Trophy to the most valuable player. They are fitting honors for two men who shaped the future of the sport, the league, and the biggest game in

Photos by AP Images

Packers coach Vince Lombardi (right) accepts the trophy that would later bear his name from Commissioner Pete Rozelle following his team's 35-10 victory over the Chiefs in Super Bowl I.

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American sports, beginning with the Packers' 35-10 victory over the Kansas City Chiefs at the Los Angeles Coliseum on Jan. 15, 1967.

"Pete was the greatest politician ever to hold the commissioner's chair in any sport, and he knew he was wired out there in L.A.," says Izenberg, author of *Rozelle: A Biography*. "He had allies and knew good things would happen."

As reluctant as Lombardi was to play the AFL-NFL World Championship Game (it wouldn't be known as the Super Bowl until two years later) in Los Angeles, Rozelle was just as eager.

A native of South Gate, Calif., about five miles from downtown L.A., Rozelle had several stints in the Rams organization – first as a member of their public relations department and then as their general manager from 1957-59.

A decade later, well into his tenure as NFL commissioner, Rozelle knew where he wanted to play the first joint championship game with the AFL.

David J. Phillip/AP Images

Getty Images

Packers center Scott Wells raises the Lombardi Trophy following the team's Super Bowl XLV win over the Steelers.

Jim O'Brien (85) reacts after kicking the game-winning field goal for the Colts against Dallas in Super Bowl V. That year's Super Bowl was the first to award the Vince Lombardi Trophy to the victor. It's also the only Super Bowl to have the MVP come from the losing team: Cowboys linebacker Chuck Howley.

"Pete was an L.A. guy," says Joe Browne, a longtime NFL executive whose 50 years in the league office included almost three decades working alongside Rozelle. "Although he was a quiet individual, he enjoyed the glamour and sizzle that was synonymous with Southern California."

Rozelle said in an interview with the *Los Angeles Times* in 1993 his favorite thing about the Super Bowl is "just being part of something that gets so much national attention." It was clear he wanted as much hype for the championship game as possible.

Except Rozelle didn't get his dream stadium.

He wanted the Rose Bowl, with its majestic location in Pasadena that is celebrated every New Year's Day with one of college football's most storied contests. But the Big 10 and the Pacific Athletic Conference (soon to become the Pac-8) blocked the move, so the leagues had to settle for the Coliseum.

All week long, Lombardi was on edge – even more so than usual. Already nervous about carrying the flag for the NFL in its initial matchup with the AFL, Lombardi didn't love the added pressures.

"He didn't like distractions. Even the smallest distraction had him come unglued," Packers Hall of Fame guard Jerry Kramer recalls. "His wife, Marie, ate dinner with us when we traveled. She liked ice cream on her pie, so she asked for a scoop of ice cream. He yelled at her, 'Marie, when you're with the team, you eat what the team eats! Now, no ice cream!'"

That said, Lombardi's fears about L.A. were warranted.

Packers wide receiver Max McGee blew off curfew the night before the game and went out on the town with two flight attendants he met on the trip to California. McGee, who returned to the hotel at 6:30 a.m., shook off his hangover to make a one-handed grab for the first touchdown in Super Bowl history.

The Chiefs would keep it close for two quarters, trailing just 14-10 at halftime, before Lombardi's Packers overwhelmed them in the second half.

Rozelle got pretty much everything he wanted: a gorgeous Southern California day; a somewhat competitive game; the largest sports audience in TV history (a combined 65 million viewers watched on NBC and CBS); and a Packers win.

Though he didn't admit that last part at the time.

"I have to tell you, I was rooting hard for Green Bay," he told Izenberg years later, noting that CBS' rights to NFL games and two of the next three Super Bowls meant he wanted to keep the network happy.

It was with great relief, then, that Rozelle presented the World Professional Football Trophy to a smiling Lombardi in the postgame locker room.

Both Levey/Getty Images

Commissioner Roger Goodell (left) and Patriots QB Tom Brady hold the Pete Rozelle MVP Trophy during a press conference after Super Bowl LI.

N.Y. Giants running back Ottis Anderson (24) was the first winner of the Pete Rozelle MVP Award after rushing for 102 yards and catching five passes in the team's 20-19 win over the Bills in Super Bowl XXV.

Interestingly, Rozelle had enlisted only one company to design the trophy: Tiffany & Co., a New York City institution since 1837. During a meeting with Rozelle, Tiffany VP Oscar Riedner sketched a picture on a cocktail napkin of a football atop a triangular platform. The entire trophy would be made of sterling silver. Rozelle loved the design, as did most in the NFL and AFL.

"(Chiefs owner) Lamar Hunt didn't think it was that attractive," Rozelle told the *L.A. Times* in 1993. "He was taken with the hockey cup (the Stanley Cup) that goes back years and years.

"Until he won it. Then he thought it was beautiful."

Hunt's Chiefs won Super Bowl IV. By the time the Colts were awarded the trophy a year later, it had been renamed in honor of Lombardi, who had passed away in September 1970. Since then, the Lombardi Trophy has remained virtually unchanged.

It stands 22 inches tall and weighs seven pounds, with a full-sized silver football that rests on a three-sided stand. (Members of the winning team can purchase a replica that is 75 percent of the size of the original.)

The trophy, which costs $50,000, takes four months to manufacture by hand in Tiffany's workshop in Cumberland, R.I. The only change

Bill Haber/AP Images

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in the manufacturing process since the early days of the trophy is that the NFL shield is now etched via sand blasting, as opposed to the acid etching initially used. Acid etching produced inconsistent results and used dangerous chemicals, so the Tiffany Crystal Etching team developed the sand-blasting process in 2000.

Every NFL player, coach, and executive dreams of one day holding the finished Lombardi Trophy while being showered in confetti. It's why Saints coach Sean Payton took it to bed with him after winning Super Bowl XLIV.

"I probably drooled on it, man," Payton jokes.

It's had other unique experiences. The Ravens thought they'd lost it the night of Super Bowl XLVII. Coach John Harbaugh was relieved to see it the following morning. And Patriots tight end Rob Gronkowski put a dent in the trophy when he bunted a baseball during a celebration of the Super Bowl LIII champs at Red Sox opening day in 2019.

"It sounded exactly like what you think a baseball hitting the Lombardi Trophy would sound like," confirms Patriots center Ted Karras.

Then there was a year ago, during the Buccaneers' Super Bowl LV boat parade, when Tom Brady tossed the trophy from his boat to another one carrying a few of his teammates, including tight end Cameron Brate, who made the catch. Only Brady's 8-year-old daughter, Vivian, who screamed, "Dad! No!" seemed to have the sense it wasn't the best idea.

From afar, Kramer thought the same thing.

"He obviously was having fun and he's a great guy and all that, but … he didn't know that it was going to be caught. I got a little touchy about that," Kramer says.

Then he adds, "We're awfully proud of the fact it is the Lombardi Trophy."

Kramer would be relieved to know that following Rozelle's retirement in 1989, an initial push to rename the trophy in honor of Rozelle met resistance. Instead, the league office and team owners decided to put the name of the "Godfather of the Super Bowl" on the game's MVP trophy.

Rozelle attended Super Bowl XXV and saw New York Giants running back Ottis Anderson rush for 102 yards and a touchdown to become the first winner of the Pete Rozelle Trophy. At the time, it was an 18-inch-tall silver trophy in the shape of a rising star. Coincidentally, the last player to win the Rozelle Trophy in that design was also a Giant: quarterback Eli Manning, who won it for the second time after knocking off the Patriots, for a second time, in Super Bowl XLVI.

A year later, NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell awarded the Rozelle Trophy to Ravens quarterback Joe Flacco in its current design: an 11.5-inch-long, 6.62-inch-high sterling silver NFL-sized football that sits on a detached felted-top base.

Tiffany & Co. has manufactured the Rozelle Trophy since its inception in 1991 and, along with the NFL, rebranded it in 2013 to complement the Lombardi Trophy. The only player to win both versions of the trophy is Brady, who has two of the star trophies and three silver footballs.

Soon, in the birthplace of the Super Bowl, Goodell will hand another Rozelle Trophy to an MVP, just moments after the latest Lombardi Trophy is awarded.

Two men who helped lay the foundation for pro football's biggest event. Still a key part of it today.

"It's gotten awfully big, it really has," Rozelle said of the Super Bowl in 1993, and it's continued to grow since then. "But it was never small after that first one."

Mike Garafolo *is a reporter, host, and insider for NFL Network. He's covered the NFL for 20 years. He lives in New Jersey with his wife, Jessica, and daughters, Carmen and Vivian.*

Photos courtesy of Tiffany & Co.

The Lombardi Trophy takes four months to manufacture by hand in Tiffany's workshop in Cumberland, R.I. The only change in the manufacturing process since the early days of the trophy is that the NFL shield is now etched via sand blasting, as opposed to the acid etching initially used. The Tiffany Crystal Etching team developed the sand-blasting process in 2000.

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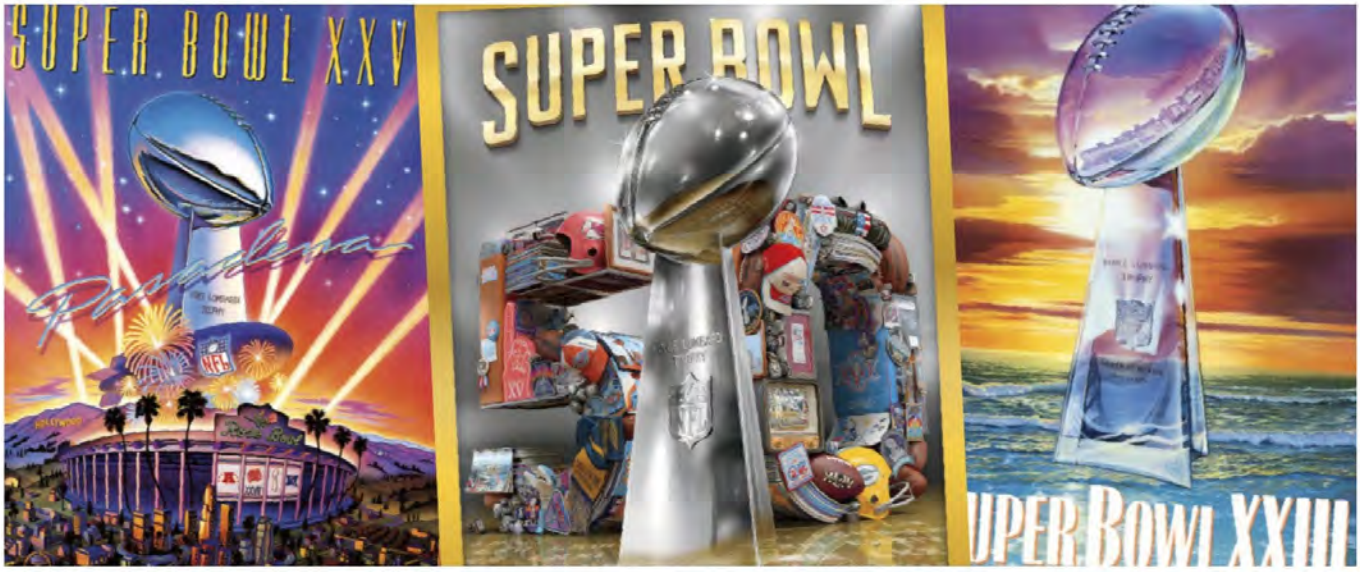
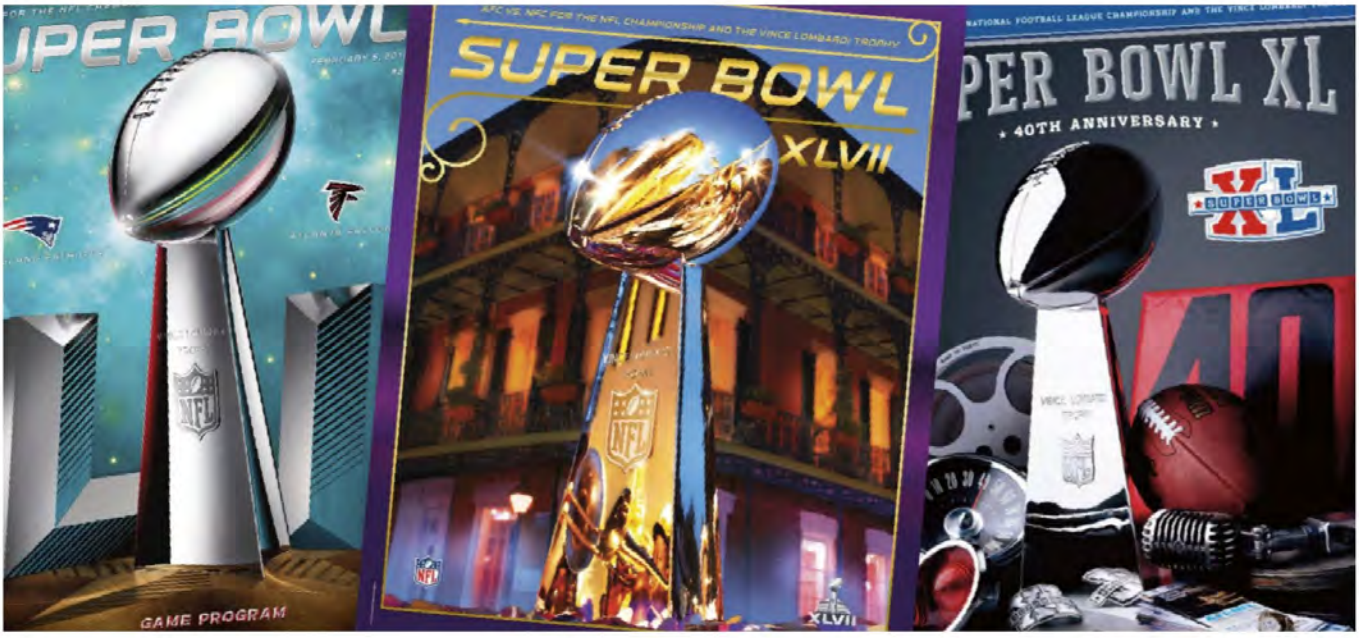


THE FIRST 55

A YEAR-BY-YEAR JOURNEY THROUGH PAST SUPER BOWLS RECALLS THE PEOPLE AND PERFORMANCES THAT ARE NOW LEGENDARY.



Quarterback Len Dawson was the architect behind the Chiefs' 23-7 victory over Minnesota in Super Bowl IV, the final game before the AFL-NFL merger.

Tony Tomsic/AP Images

SUPER BOWL I

January 15, 1967
Memorial Coliseum | Los Angeles
Attendance: 61,946

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Kansas City	0	10	0	0	10
Green Bay	7	7	14	7	35

MVP: Bart Starr (QB), Green Bay
16 of 23 passing, 250 yards, 2 TDs

The Packers opened the Super Bowl era by defeating the AFL champion Chiefs behind the passing of Bart Starr, the receiving of Max McGee, and a key interception by safety Willie Wood. Leading by a narrow 14-10 margin at the half, Green Bay took control with three second-half touchdowns, the first of which was set up by Wood's 50-yard interception return. McGee, filling in for an ailing Boyd Dowler after having only four receptions all season, caught seven passes for 138 yards and two touchdowns. Elijah Pitts rushed for two other Packers scores. All of the Chiefs' points came in the second quarter, including a 7-yard TD pass from Len Dawson to Curtis McClinton.

SUPER BOWL II

January 14, 1968
Orange Bowl | Miami
Attendance: 75,546

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Green Bay	3	13	10	7	33
Oakland	0	7	0	7	14

MVP: Bart Starr (QB), Green Bay
13 of 24 passing, 202 yards, 1 TD

Two weeks after capturing its third consecutive NFL championship, Green Bay won the Super Bowl title for the second straight year, defeating the Raiders in a game that drew the first $3 million gate in football history. Bart Starr directed an attack that built a 16-7 halftime lead and pulled away after intermission. Don Chandler kicked four field goals for the victors, and cornerback Herb Adderley capped the Green Bay scoring with his 60-yard interception-return TD. The game marked the last for Vince Lombardi as Packers coach, ending a tenure that saw him win five NFL titles and two Super Bowls.

SUPER BOWL III

January 12, 1969
Orange Bowl | Miami
Attendance: 75,389

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
N.Y. Jets	0	7	6	3	16
Baltimore	0	0	0	7	7

MVP: Joe Namath (QB), N.Y. Jets
17 of 28 passing, 206 yards

Jets quarterback Joe Namath "guaranteed" victory on the Thursday before Super Bowl III, then went out and delivered by leading the AFL's Jets to a huge upset – beating a Colts team that had lost only once all season. Namath directed a steady attack that dominated the NFL champions, while the Jets' defense intercepted Colts quarterback Earl Morrall three times in the first half. New York had 337 total yards, including 121 on the ground from Matt Snell. Johnny Unitas, who missed most of the season with a sore elbow, came off the bench to lead Baltimore to its only touchdown late in the fourth quarter.

SUPER BOWL IV

January 11, 1970
Tulane Stadium | New Orleans
Attendance: 80,562

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Minnesota	0	0	7	0	7
Kansas City	3	13	7	0	23

MVP: Len Dawson (QB), Kansas City
12 of 17 passing, 142 yards, 1 TD

The AFL squared the Super Bowl series at two victories apiece behind Len Dawson's superb quarterbacking and a powerful defense. Dawson called an almost flawless game and hit Otis Taylor on a 46-yard pass for the Chiefs' final touchdown, minutes after the Vikings scored their only points. The Kansas City defense forced five turnovers (three interceptions, two fumbles) and limited Minnesota's strong rushing game to 67 yards. Jan Stenerud provided an early spark for the Chiefs with field goals from 48, 32, and 25 yards, while Mike Garrett's 5-yard TD run before halftime made the score 16-0.

SUPER BOWL V

January 17, 1971
Orange Bowl | Miami
Attendance: 79,204

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Baltimore	0	6	0	10	16
Dallas	3	10	0	0	13

MVP: Chuck Howley (LB), Dallas
2 interceptions, 3 tackles

A 32-yard field goal by rookie kicker Jim O'Brien brought the Colts to victory in the closing seconds of Super Bowl V, the first time the Super Bowl was played on artificial turf. The Cowboys led, 13-6, in the fourth quarter, but interceptions by Rick Volk and Mike Curtis set up a Baltimore touchdown and O'Brien's decisive kick. Johnny Unitas threw for the Colts' first touchdown – a pass that caromed off receiver Eddie Hinton's fingertips, off Dallas' Mel Renfro, and settled into the hands of tight end John Mackey, who scored on the 75-yard play. The Cowboys' Chuck Howley became the first defensive player and the first (and still only) player from a losing team to be named Super Bowl MVP.

SUPER BOWL VI

January 16, 1972
Tulane Stadium | New Orleans
Attendance: 81,023

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Dallas	3	7	7	7	24
Miami	0	3	0	0	3

MVP: Roger Staubach (QB), Dallas
12 of 19 passing, 119 yards, 2 TDs

The Cowboys rushed for 252 yards, and their defense limited the Dolphins to just 185 total yards and became the first to not allow a touchdown in the Super Bowl. Chuck Howley's recovery of a Larry Csonka fumble led to a 3-0 Dallas advantage, and a Roger Staubach TD pass to Lance Alworth made it 10-3 at the break. After the Cowboys received the second-half kickoff, Duane Thomas keyed a 71-yard march that ended with his 3-yard scoring run. Early in the fourth quarter, Howley picked off a pass that he returned deep into Miami territory, and three plays later Staubach passed 7 yards to Mike Ditka for the game's final touchdown. Thomas finished with 95 rushing yards and teammate Walt Garrison added 74.

SUPER BOWL VII

January 14, 1973
Memorial Coliseum | Los Angeles
Attendance: 90,182

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Miami	7	7	0	0	14
Washington	0	0	0	7	7

MVP: Jake Scott (S), Miami
2 interceptions

On their way to perfection, the Dolphins played virtually perfect football in Super Bowl VII. Their defense allowed Washington to cross midfield only once in the first half, and Miami's offense turned good field position into two touchdowns. The Dolphins drove 63 yards for their first score, a 28-yard pass from Bob Griese to Howard Twilley. After Washington reached the Miami 48 late in the half, linebacker Nick Buoniconti intercepted a pass that he returned 25 yards. Five plays later, just 18 seconds before intermission, Jim Kiick scored on a 1-yard run. Dolphins safety Jake Scott had two interceptions, one in the end zone that ended another Washington threat.

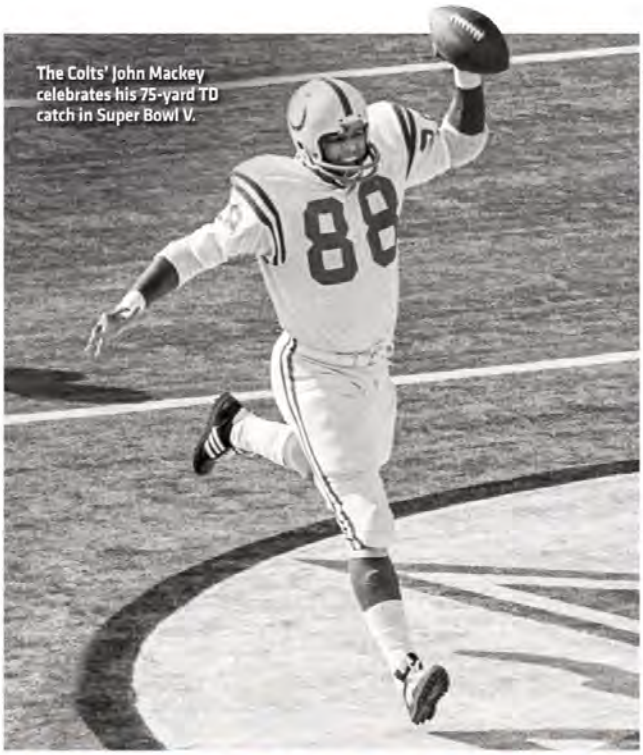
SUPER BOWL VIII

January 13, 1974
Rice Stadium | Houston
Attendance: 71,882

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Minnesota	0	0	0	7	7
Miami	14	3	7	0	24

MVP: Larry Csonka (RB), Miami
33 carries, 145 yards, 2 TDs

Representing the AFC for the third consecutive year, the Dolphins scored the first two times they had the ball – on marches of 62 and 56 yards – while their defense limited Minnesota to only seven plays in the first quarter. Larry Csonka capped the initial 10-play drive with his 5-yard TD bolt through right guard, and another 10-play scoring drive ended with Jim Kiick bursting 1 yard up the middle. Garo Yepremian's 28-yard field goal made it 17-0. The Vikings would then drive deep into Miami territory, but were stopped on fourth-and-1 from the 6 on a big hit by middle linebacker Nick Buoniconti.



The Colts' John Mackey celebrates his 75-yard TD catch in Super Bowl V.

Harold Valentine/AP Images

Free safety Jake Scott was named MVP of Super Bowl VII after his two interceptions helped the Dolphins complete a perfect season.

George Long/Getty Images

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SUPER BOWL IX

January 12, 1975
Tulane Stadium | New Orleans
Attendance: 80,997

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Pittsburgh	0	2	7	7	16
Minnesota	0	0	0	6	6

MVP: Franco Harris (RB), Pittsburgh
34 carries, 158 yards, 1 TD

A new chapter in Steelers history began with this victory over the Vikings, the first of four Super Bowl titles won under coach Chuck Noll. The teams struggled through a first half that saw the only points scored when Pittsburgh's Dwight White downed quarterback Fran Tarkenton in the end zone for a safety. But it didn't take long for the Steelers to add to that lead after intermission. Minnesota's Bill Brown fumbled the second-half kickoff and Marv Kellum recovered on the Vikings 30. Four plays later, Franco Harris' 9-yard touchdown run gave his team a 9-0 lead. Pittsburgh's powerful defense permitted only 119 total yards on the day, including 17 rushing yards.

SUPER BOWL X

January 18, 1976
Orange Bowl | Miami
Attendance: 80,187

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Dallas	7	3	0	7	17
Pittsburgh	7	0	0	14	21

MVP: Lynn Swann (WR), Pittsburgh
4 receptions, 161 yards, 1 TD

The Steelers captured the Super Bowl for the second straight year, helped along by Terry Bradshaw's 64-yard touchdown pass to Lynn Swann and an aggressive defense that snuffed out a late Dallas rally. The Steelers scored on Bradshaw's 7-yard TD pass to Randy Grossman, the long throw to Swann, Roy Gerela's 36- and 18-yard field goals, and Reggie Harrison's blocked punt that went through the end zone for a safety. Dallas, though, still only trailed by four when it took possession with 1:22 to go, but had its hopes dashed on Glen Edwards' end-zone interception on the game's final play.

SUPER BOWL XI

January 9, 1977
Rose Bowl | Pasadena
Attendance: 103,438

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Oakland	0	16	3	13	32
Minnesota	0	0	7	7	14

MVP: Fred Biletnikoff (WR), Oakland
4 receptions, 79 yards

In front of 81 million television viewers, the largest audience ever to watch a sporting event, the Raiders won their first Super Bowl title. Clarence Davis rushed for 137 yards, Fred Biletnikoff made four key receptions, and the defense came up big for the victors. Oakland built a 16-0 halftime lead – on Errol Mann's 24-yard field goal, a 1-yard TD pass from Ken Stabler to Dave Casper, and Pete Banaszak's 1-yard scoring run. After the Vikings cut the deficit to 19-7, a pair of fourth-quarter interceptions clinched the championship for the Raiders. One set up Banaszak's second touchdown run, while the other resulted in cornerback Willie Brown's 75-yard interception return for a score.

SUPER BOWL XII

January 15, 1978
Superdome | New Orleans
Attendance: 75,583

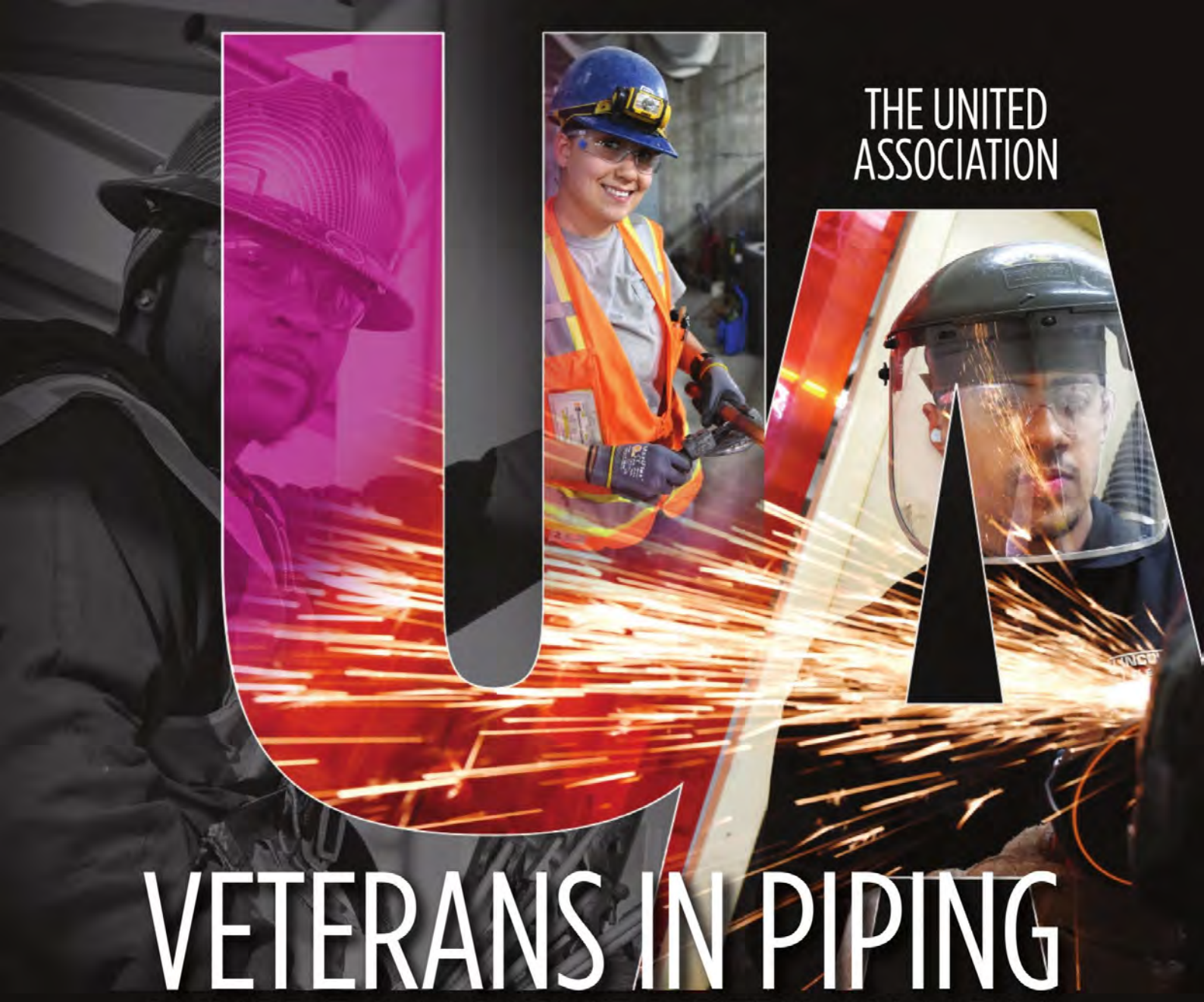
	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Dallas	10	3	7	7	27
Denver	0	0	10	0	10

MVPs: Randy White (DT) and Harvey Martin (DE), Dallas
Leaders of a defense that had four sacks and allowed just 156 total yards

Super Bowl TV viewership exceeded 100 million fans for the first time, and they watched as the Cowboys forced six first-half turnovers on their way to a 13-0 halftime lead. Dallas then tacked on two second-half TDs, the first on Butch Johnson's spectacular diving catch in the end zone and the other when running back Robert Newhouse tossed a 29-yard pass to Golden Richards. As part of the win, Roger Staubach completed 17 of 25 passes for 183 yards and Tony Dorsett rushed for 68 yards, including a 3-yard TD. The game marked the first – and remains the only – time the MVP Award was shared.

Ross Lewis/Getty Images

Franco Harris rushed for 158 yards to earn MVP honors in Super Bowl IX, the first of the Steelers' six Super Bowl triumphs.



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SUPER BOWL XIII

January 21, 1979
Orange Bowl | Miami
Attendance: 79,484

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Pittsburgh	7	14	0	14	35
Dallas	7	7	3	14	31

MVP: Terry Bradshaw (QB), Pittsburgh
17 of 30 passing, 318 yards, 4 TDs

Terry Bradshaw's four touchdown passes led the Steelers, who became the first team to win three Super Bowls. The first two scoring tosses went to John Stallworth, and the third, with 26 seconds remaining in the second quarter, was to Rocky Bleier for a 21-14 halftime lead. The Steelers then broke things open with TDs 19 seconds apart midway through the final quarter – Franco Harris rambled 22 yards for a score, and after Dennis Winston recovered a fumble on the ensuing kickoff, Bradshaw fired an 18-yard strike to Lynn Swann.

SUPER BOWL XIV

January 20, 1980
Rose Bowl | Pasadena
Attendance: 103,985

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
L.A. Rams	7	6	6	0	19
Pittsburgh	3	7	7	14	31

MVP: Terry Bradshaw (QB), Pittsburgh
14 of 21 passing, 309 yards, 2 TDs

Trailing 13-10 at halftime, the Steelers rallied to win their fourth Super Bowl crown in six years. They briefly moved ahead in the third quarter when Terry Bradshaw hit Lynn Swann on a 47-yard TD pass, but the Rams responded on their next possession with Lawrence McCutcheon throwing a halfback option touchdown to Ron Smith. The Steelers would finally take the lead for good in the fourth quarter on Bradshaw's 73-yard touchdown throw to John Stallworth. After stopping an L.A. threat with a Jack Lambert interception, Pittsburgh sealed the verdict with Franco Harris' 1-yard TD run.

Terry Bradshaw earned MVP honors in the Steelers' back-to-back wins in Super Bowls XIII and XIV.

Al Messerschmidt/AP Images

SUPER BOWL XV

January 25, 1981
Superdome | New Orleans
Attendance: 76,135

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Oakland	14	0	10	3	27
Philadelphia	0	3	0	7	10

MVP: Jim Plunkett (QB), Oakland
13 of 21 passing, 261 yards, 3 TDs

Jim Plunkett passed for three touchdowns, including an 80-yard strike to Kenny King late in the first quarter, as the Raiders became the first wild card team to win the Super Bowl. Linebacker Rod Martin set up Oakland's first touchdown with an interception, one of a Super Bowl-record three he had in the game, while King's grab marked the longest play in Super Bowl history at the time. Oakland's Mark van Eeghen led all rushers with 75 yards, while teammate Cliff Branch had five receptions for 67 yards, including two catches that went for touchdowns.

SUPER BOWL XVI

January 24, 1982
Silverdome | Pontiac
Attendance: 81,270

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
San Francisco	7	13	0	6	26
Cincinnati	0	0	7	14	21

MVP: Joe Montana (QB), San Francisco
14 of 22 passing, 157 yards, 1 TD

Ray Wersching kicked a Super Bowl record-tying four field goals and Joe Montana directed a controlled passing attack to lift the 49ers to their first NFL crown. San Francisco owned a 20-0 halftime lead thanks to Montana's 1-yard TD run, Earl Cooper's 11-yard scoring catch, and 22- and 26-yard field goals from Wersching. The Bengals closed the gap on Ken Anderson's 5-yard TD run and Dan Ross' 4-yard scoring grab, but the 49ers kicker padded the lead with two fourth-quarter field goals. Cincinnati outgained San Francisco, 356-275, marking the first time in Super Bowl history that the losing team had more total yards.

Three of the stars of the Raiders' Super Bowl XV victory were (left to right) Mark van Eeghen, Kenny King, and Jim Plunkett.

Michael Zagaris/Getty Images

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AP Images

Joe Montana outdueled the Dolphins' Dan Marino in the 49ers' Super Bowl XIX win, throwing for 331 yards and three touchdowns.

SUPER BOWL XVII

January 30, 1983
Rose Bowl | Pasadena
Attendance: 103,667

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Miami	7	10	0	0	17
Washington	0	10	3	14	27

MVP: John Riggins (RB), Washington
38 carries, 166 yards, 1 TD

John Riggins topped 100 rushing yards for the fourth straight playoff game, part of a 276-yard ground effort for Washington, which won its first NFL title since 1942. The Dolphins held a 17-10 halftime lead, but wouldn't score again. Mark Moseley's short field goal pulled Washington within three, and Riggins moved his team ahead when he rambled 43 yards on a fourth-and-1 play early in the fourth quarter. Charlie Brown's 6-yard TD catch with 1:55 left closed out the scoring. The Dolphins managed only 176 total yards of offense, and just 34 after intermission.

SUPER BOWL XVIII

January 22, 1984
Tampa Stadium | Tampa
Attendance: 72,920

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Washington	0	3	6	0	9
L.A. Raiders	7	14	14	3	38

MVP: Marcus Allen (RB), L.A. Raiders
20 carries, 191 yards, 2 TDs

Derrick Jensen's end-zone recovery of a punt he blocked – giving the Raiders a 7-0 lead less than five minutes into the game – put his team on course for a one-sided victory. Two key plays sealed Washington's fate. With just seven seconds left in the first half, Raiders linebacker Jack Squirek intercepted a pass at the Washington 5-yard line that he ran in for a touchdown to give Los Angeles a 21-3 lead. Then, on the final play of the third quarter, game MVP Marcus Allen darted 74 yards for a backbreaking touchdown.

SUPER BOWL XIX

January 20, 1985
Stanford Stadium | Stanford
Attendance: 84,059

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Miami	10	6	0	0	16
San Francisco	7	21	10	0	38

MVP: Joe Montana (QB), San Francisco
24 of 35 passing, 331 yards, 3 TDs

The 49ers' offense piled up 537 net yards as Joe Montana got the best of Dan Marino in this battle of future Hall of Fame QBs. Roger Craig became the first player to score three TDs in a Super Bowl game, one of those on an 8-yard TD reception that gave the 49ers a lead they would never relinquish. He added a short touchdown run before halftime and would close out San Francisco's scoring with a 16-yard reception from Montana. Craig finished with 58 yards rushing and caught seven passes for another 77 yards. The 49ers also held a 37:11 to 22:49 time of possession advantage.

SUPER BOWL XX

January 26, 1986
Superdome | New Orleans
Attendance: 73,818

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Chicago	13	10	21	2	46
New England	3	0	0	7	10

MVP: Richard Dent (DE), Chicago
1.5 sacks, part of defense that allowed 7 rushing yards

In a dominating display from start to finish, the Bears' league-leading defense recorded seven sacks and limited the Patriots to just 7 rushing yards. Chicago yielded an early field goal, but then scored the game's next 44 points. Jim McMahon and Matt Suhey had scoring runs and Kevin Butler kicked three field goals to give the Bears a 23-3 halftime lead. After forcing a Patriots punt to start the second half, Chicago marched 96 yards for another TD to put the game out of reach. The Bears' Walter Payton rushed for 61 yards, while Richard Dent became just the fifth defender to be named Super Bowl MVP.

SUPER BOWL XXI

January 25, 1987
Rose Bowl | Pasadena
Attendance: 101,063

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Denver	10	0	0	10	20
N.Y. Giants	7	2	17	13	39

MVP: Phil Simms (QB), N.Y. Giants
22 of 25 passing, 268 yards, 3 TDs

Buoyed by a big defensive stand in the second quarter, the Giants captured their first NFL title since 1956. The Broncos, already leading by a 10-7 score, had a first down at the New York 1-yard line, but were stymied on three running plays and then missed a short field-goal attempt. The Giants would take command in the third quarter en route to a 30-point second half – scoring four touchdowns and a field goal on their first five possessions after intermission – and moved in front for good on Mark Bavaro's 13-yard TD reception. Phil Simms deftly managed the game for the victors, setting Super Bowl records for completion percentage (88.0) and passer rating (150.92).

SUPER BOWL XXII

January 31, 1988
Jack Murphy Stadium | San Diego
Attendance: 73,302

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Washington	0	35	0	7	42
Denver	10	0	0	0	10

MVP: Doug Williams (QB), Washington
18 of 29 passing, 340 yards, 4 TDs

Washington enjoyed a record-setting second quarter on its way to victory. Trailing 10-0, Washington scored touchdowns on five straight possessions – establishing an NFL postseason mark for most points in a quarter (35). QB Doug Williams led the way by passing for four TDs, including 80- and 50-yard bombs to Ricky Sanders, and the five scores required only 18 total plays and 5:47 in possession. Timmy Smith amassed a Super Bowl-record 204 rushing yards (a mark that still stands), Barry Wilburn had two of Washington's three interceptions, and Alvin Walton recorded two of the team's five sacks.

SUPER BOWL XXIII

January 22, 1989
Joe Robbie Stadium | Miami
Attendance: 75,129

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Cincinnati	0	3	10	3	16
San Francisco	3	0	3	14	20

MVP: Jerry Rice (WR), San Francisco
11 receptions, 215 yards, 1 TD

By scoring on one of the most famous and clutch drives in league history, the 49ers became the first NFC team to win three Super Bowls. Cincinnati had taken a 16-13 lead on Jim Breech's 40-yard field goal with 3:20 left in the fourth quarter, but Joe Montana calmly drove San Francisco 92 yards over 11 plays, capped by his 10-yard touchdown pass to John Taylor with just 34 seconds remaining. It was Taylor's lone catch of the game. Montana completed 23 of 36 passes for 357 yards, helping San Francisco post a 453 to 229 advantage in total yards. The game was the last at the helm for 49ers head coach Bill Walsh.

SUPER BOWL XXIV

January 28, 1990
Superdome | New Orleans
Attendance: 72,919

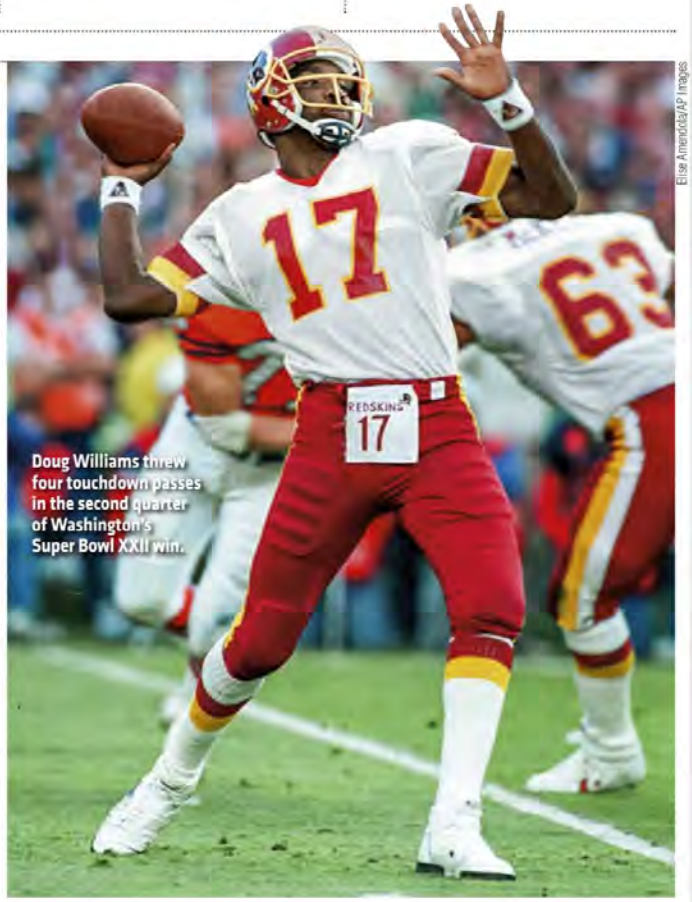
	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
San Francisco	13	14	14	14	55
Denver	3	0	7	0	10

MVP: Joe Montana (QB), San Francisco
22 of 29 passing, 297 yards, 5 TDs

The 49ers coasted to victory while setting a Super Bowl record for points that still stands. They scored touchdowns on four of their six first-half possessions to take a 27-3 lead at intermission, then cemented their advantage with interceptions by Michael Walter and Chet Brooks to end Denver's first two drives of the second half. Joe Montana was named Super Bowl MVP for a then-record third time, with his favorite target being Jerry Rice, who caught seven passes for 148 yards and three touchdowns. The 49ers' dominance extended to first downs (28 to 12), net yards (461 to 167), and time of possession (39:31 to 20:29).

Eric Risberg/AP Images

Head coach Bill Parcells is carried off the field after the Giants' win over the Broncos in Super Bowl XXI.



Elise Amendola/AP Images

Doug Williams threw four touchdown passes in the second quarter of Washington's Super Bowl XXII win.

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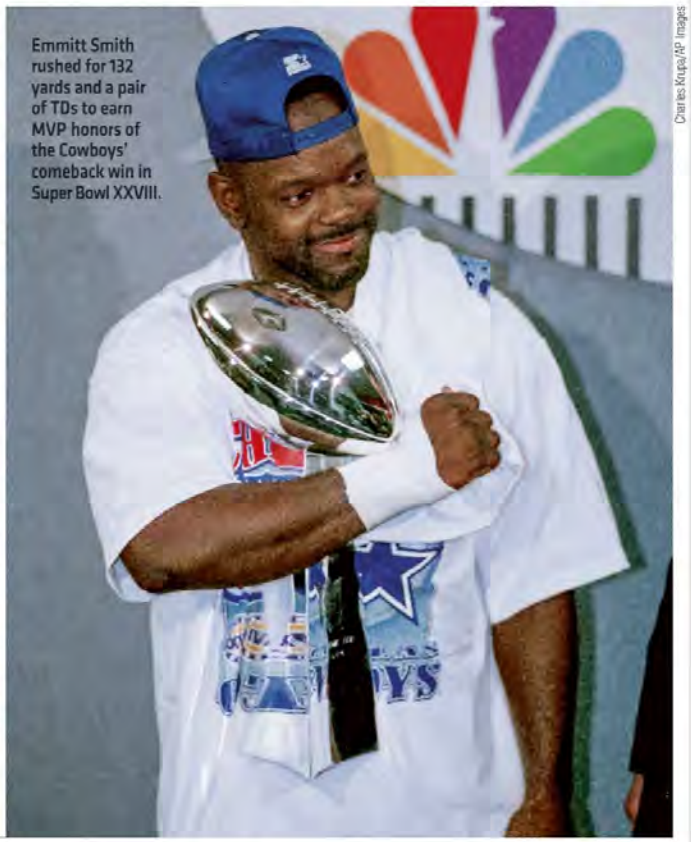
Amy Sancetta/AP Images

Troy Aikman was named Super Bowl XXVII MVP after leading Dallas to its first title in 13 seasons.


Charles Krupa/AP Images

Emmitt Smith rushed for 132 yards and a pair of TDs to earn MVP honors of the Cowboys' comeback win in Super Bowl XXVIII.

SUPER BOWL XXV

January 27, 1991
Tampa Stadium | Tampa
Attendance: 73,813

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Buffalo	3	9	0	7	19
N.Y. Giants	3	7	7	3	20

MVP: Ottis Anderson (RB), N.Y. Giants
102 rushing yards, 1 TD; 5 receptions

Successfully employing a ball-control offense that saw them maintain possession for more than 40 minutes, the Giants edged the high-powered Bills. Fourteen of New York's 73 plays came on its opening drive of the third quarter, which consumed a then-Super Bowl-record 9:29 and ended with Ottis Anderson's 1-yard touchdown run. A Thurman Thomas TD run put Buffalo back in front, but Matt Bahr gave New York the lead for good with his 21-yard field goal midway through the fourth quarter. Giants QB Jeff Hostetler was efficient in victory, completing 20 of 32 passes for 222 yards, including a 14-yard TD to Stephen Baker in the second quarter.

SUPER BOWL XXVI

January 26, 1992
Metrodome | Minneapolis
Attendance: 63,130

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Washington	0	17	14	6	37
Buffalo	0	0	10	14	24

MVP: Mark Rypien (QB), Washington
18 of 33 passing, 292 yards, 2 TDs

After Buffalo had shaved 10 points off a 24-0 deficit, Mark Rypien restored order with his 30-yard TD pass to Gary Clark that propelled Washington to its third Super Bowl win in 10 years – all of them under coach Joe Gibbs but each with a different quarterback. Washington held a 17-0 halftime lead and quickly extended it on Gerald Riggs' short scoring run that was set up by a Kurt Gouveia interception. It was one of four pickoffs by the team's defense. Clark finished with seven catches for 114 yards and Art Monk added seven for 113 yards for the victors, who amassed 417 yards of total offense.

SUPER BOWL XXVII

January 31, 1993
Rose Bowl | Pasadena
Attendance: 98,374

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Buffalo	7	3	7	0	17
Dallas	14	14	3	21	52

MVP: Troy Aikman (QB), Dallas
22 of 30 passing, 273 yards, 4 TDs

Troy Aikman threw four touchdown passes, Emmitt Smith rushed for 108 yards, and the Cowboys' defense forced nine turnovers in this one-sided victory. Two of those turnovers helped the Cowboys take the lead for good late in the opening quarter. First, Dallas safety James Washington intercepted a pass that he returned to the Bills 47, setting up Aikman's 23-yard TD throw to Jay Novacek. On the next play from scrimmage, a sack by the Cowboys' Charles Haley forced a fumble that teammate Jimmie Jones scooped up and ran 2 yards for another score.

SUPER BOWL XXVIII

January 30, 1994
Georgia Dome | Atlanta
Attendance: 72,817

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Dallas	6	0	14	10	30
Buffalo	3	10	0	0	13

MVP: Emmitt Smith (RB), Dallas
30 carries, 132 yards, 2 TDs

The Cowboys became the first team to open the season 0-2 and go on to win the Super Bowl, and the fifth team to capture back-to-back Super Bowl titles. A big defensive play and Emmitt Smith's two touchdown runs helped Dallas erase a 13-6 halftime deficit. Just 55 seconds after intermission, safety James Washington recovered a fumble and weaved his way 46 yards for a touchdown to tie the game. After the Bills punted on their next possession, Smith took over, carrying seven times for 61 yards on a march that ended with his 15-yard scoring jaunt to put Dallas ahead for good. Washington added a late interception that led to another Smith touchdown run.

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SUPER BOWL XXIX

January 29, 1995
Joe Robbie Stadium | Miami
Attendance: 74,107

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
San Diego	7	3	8	8	26
San Francisco	14	14	14	7	49

MVP: Steve Young (QB), San Francisco
24 of 36 passing, 325 yards, 6 TDs

Steve Young passed for a Super Bowl-record six touchdowns as the 49ers topped the Chargers to become the first team to win five Super Bowls. The QB, who directed an explosive offense that generated seven TDs, 28 first downs, and 455 total yards, wasted little time getting his team on the scoreboard. He fired a 44-yard touchdown throw to Jerry Rice only three plays and 1:24 into the game, and made it 14-0 with a 51-yard pass to Rickey Watters on the 49ers' next possession. Both Rice and Watters scored three times in the win, and the 75 combined points set another Super Bowl record that still stands.

SUPER BOWL XXX

January 28, 1996
Sun Devil Stadium | Tempe
Attendance: 76,347

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Dallas	10	3	7	7	27
Pittsburgh	0	7	0	10	17

MVP: Larry Brown (CB), Dallas
2 interceptions, both leading to Cowboys touchdowns

Cornerback Larry Brown's two interceptions led to 14 second-half points, lifting the Cowboys to their third Super Bowl victory in four seasons and fifth title overall. Dallas scored on each of its first three possessions, taking a 13-0 lead behind Troy Aikman's 3-yard TD pass to Jay Novacek and two Chris Boniol field goals. The Steelers managed to stay close, pulling within 13-7 and then 20-17, but Brown's heroics kept Dallas ahead. Both of his pickoffs set up short scoring runs by Emmitt Smith, the second with just 3:43 remaining in the game.

SUPER BOWL XXXI

January 26, 1997
Superdome | New Orleans
Attendance: 72,301

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
New England	14	0	7	0	21
Green Bay	10	17	8	0	35

MVP: Desmond Howard (KR-PR), Green Bay, 244 return yards, 99-yard kickoff return for TD

The NFC's Super Bowl win streak reached 13 games, thanks to big plays from Brett Favre and Desmond Howard that fueled the Packers. Favre threw for two touchdowns and ran for a third, while Howard's 99-yard kickoff-return TD in the third quarter stemmed New England's momentum. On Green Bay's second play from scrimmage, Favre hit Andre Rison for a 54-yard touchdown, and he later connected with Antonio Freeman on an 81-yard strike. But it wasn't until Howard's return late in the third quarter – on the heels of Curtis Martin's 18-yard rushing TD – that the Packers' lead was safe.

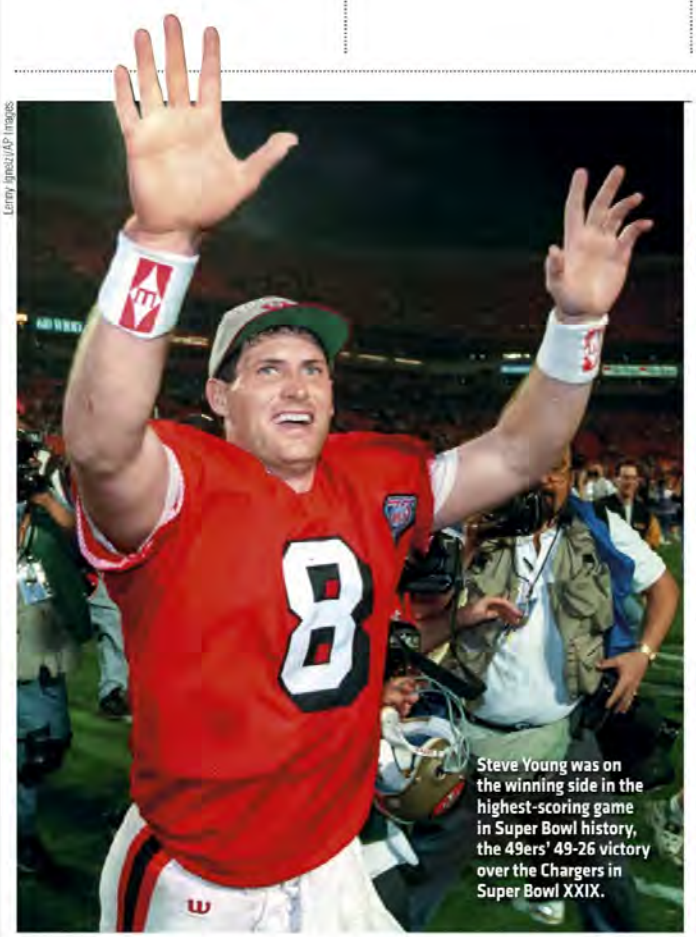
SUPER BOWL XXXII

January 25, 1998
Qualcomm Stadium | San Diego
Attendance: 68,912

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Green Bay	7	7	3	7	24
Denver	7	10	7	7	31

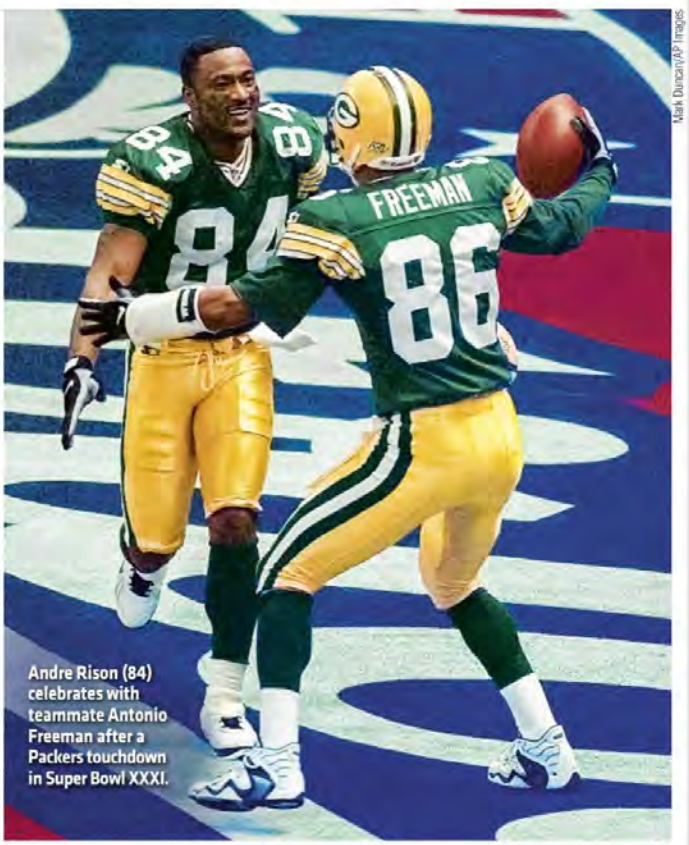
MVP: Terrell Davis (RB), Denver
30 carries, 157 yards, 3 TDs

Terrell Davis rushed for 157 yards and a Super Bowl-record three touchdowns to lead the Broncos to their first NFL title and snap the NFC's streak of Super Bowl victories at 13. With the game knotted, 24-24, and just 3:27 left in regulation, the Broncos took over at the Packers 49. Davis rushed for 2 yards, and a 15-yard facemask penalty moved the ball to the Packers 32. Three plays later, Davis' 17-yard run brought the ball to the 1, and after a timeout, he waltzed into the end zone for the go-ahead score. Green Bay drove to the Broncos 31 in the waning seconds, but John Mobley knocked away Brett Favre's fourth-down pass to preserve the victory.



Lenny Ignelzi/AP Images

Steve Young was on the winning side in the highest-scoring game in Super Bowl history, the 49ers' 49-26 victory over the Chargers in Super Bowl XXIX.



Mark Duncan/AP Images

Andre Rison (84) celebrates with teammate Antonio Freeman after a Packers touchdown in Super Bowl XXXI.

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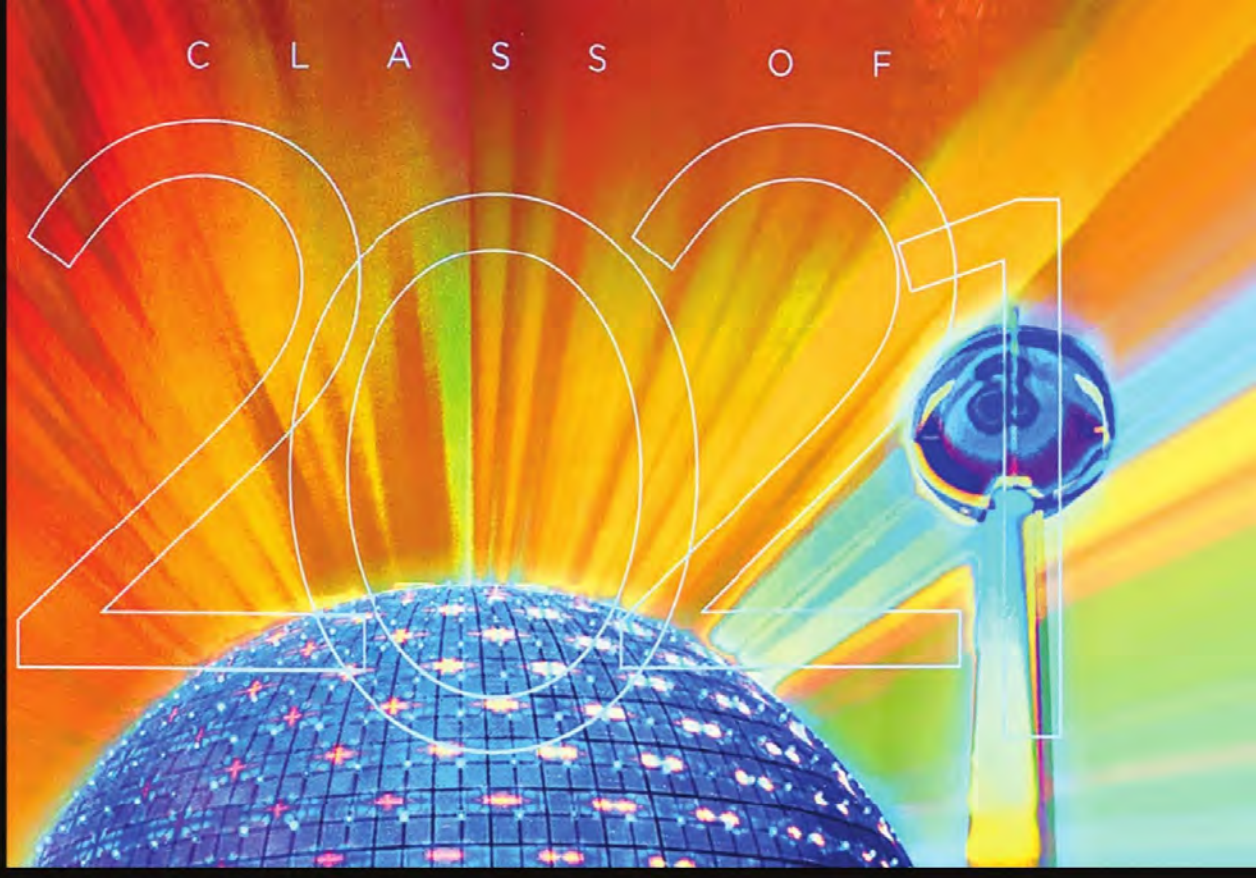

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Doug Mills/AP Images

John Elway's final NFL game was one to remember, throwing for 336 yards and a touchdown and rushing for another score in the Broncos' Super Bowl XXXIII victory over Atlanta.

SUPER BOWL XXXIII

January 31, 1999
Pro Player Stadium | Miami
Attendance: 74,803

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Denver	7	10	0	17	34
Atlanta	3	3	0	13	19

MVP: John Elway (QB), Denver
18 of 29 passing, 336 yards, 1 TD

Playing in his final game, John Elway shined while leading the Broncos to their second consecutive Super Bowl victory, the first AFC team to achieve that feat since the Steelers 19 years earlier. Denver took the lead early, with Elway's 41-yard pass to Rod Smith setting up Howard Griffith's short TD run. Elway then fired an 80-yard scoring strike to Smith to put the Broncos ahead 17-3. In the second half, Darrien Gordon dashed Atlanta's comeback hopes with interceptions on consecutive possessions that led to Denver touchdowns, the second of those a 3-yard Elway run making it 31-6.

SUPER BOWL XXXIV

January 30, 2000
Georgia Dome | Atlanta
Attendance: 72,625

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
St. Louis	3	6	7	7	23
Tennessee	0	0	6	10	16

MVP: Kurt Warner (QB), St. Louis
24 of 45 passing, 414 yards, 2 TDs

Mike Jones tackled the Titans' Kevin Dyson at the 1-yard line as time expired, securing the Rams' first Super Bowl title. For coach Dick Vermeil, the win came 19 years after he brought the Eagles to the Super Bowl, marking the longest stretch between Super Bowl appearances by a coach. St. Louis reached the red zone on each of its first six possessions, but could muster just three field goals and one touchdown. The Titans then rallied with two long TD drives and an Al Del Greco field goal to tie the game late in the fourth quarter. It was quickly untied on the next play from scrimmage, when Kurt Warner fired a 73-yard touchdown pass to Isaac Bruce. Tennessee then drove deep into Rams territory, only to come up empty when Jones wrapped up Dyson shy of the goal line.

SUPER BOWL XXXV

January 28, 2001
Raymond James Stadium | Tampa
Attendance: 71,921

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Baltimore	7	3	14	10	34
N.Y. Giants	0	0	7	0	7

MVP: Ray Lewis (LB), Baltimore
Star of a defense that allowed just 152 total yards

The Ravens' defense led the way by forcing five turnovers, recording four sacks, and not allowing an offensive touchdown as the franchise posted its first Super Bowl victory. There were 21 points scored in a dizzying 36-second span of the third quarter, starting when Baltimore's Duane Starks returned an interception 49 yards for a touchdown and a 17-0 Ravens lead. The Giants' Ron Dixon brought back the ensuing kickoff 97 yards for a score, but Jermaine Lewis matched it with a kickoff-return TD of his own. The Giants managed just one first down on their final four possessions.

SUPER BOWL XXXVI

February 3, 2002
Superdome | New Orleans
Attendance: 72,922

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
St. Louis	3	0	0	14	17
New England	0	14	3	3	20

MVP: Tom Brady (QB), New England
16 of 27 passing, 145 yards, 1 TD

Adam Vinatieri's 48-yard field goal proved the difference as the Patriots prevailed in the first Super Bowl in which the winning points were scored on the final play. Underdog New England had built a 17-3 lead, but the Rams tied things up with two fourth-quarter touchdowns – the second with just 1:30 to go – before Patriots QB Tom Brady positioned his team for the game-winning kick. He completed five passes on the drive, three of those to J.R. Redmond and another a 23-yarder to Troy Brown that brought the ball into St. Louis territory.

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Head coach Bill Belichick reacts to a big play during the Patriots' Super Bowl XXXIX win, the team's third title in four seasons.

Mark Humphrey/AP Images

Willie Parker races for the goal line on his 75-yard touchdown run against the Seahawks in Super Bowl XL. It remains the longest TD run in Super Bowl history.

SUPER BOWL XXXVII

January 26, 2003
Qualcomm Stadium | San Diego
Attendance: 67,603

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Oakland	3	0	6	12	21
Tampa Bay	3	17	14	14	48

MVP: Dexter Jackson (S), Tampa Bay
2 of team's 5 interceptions

Tampa Bay intercepted five Raiders passes, three that were returned for touchdowns, on its way to the franchise's first Super Bowl title. After an early field goal, Oakland managed just two first downs on its next nine possessions while the Buccaneers rolled to 34 straight points. Keenan McCardell ignited a decisive sequence, catching TD passes on back-to-back drives that put his team ahead, 27-3. Dwight Smith brought back pickoffs of 44 and 50 yards for scores, and Derrick Brooks had a 44-yarder for a touchdown after the Raiders narrowed the deficit to 34-21 in the fourth quarter. The Bucs' defense limited Oakland to just 269 total yards – 19 on the ground –.and Tampa Bay enjoyed a 37:14 to 22:46 advantage in time of possession.

SUPER BOWL XXXVIII

February 1, 2004
Reliant Stadium | Houston
Attendance: 71,525

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Carolina	0	10	0	19	29
New England	0	14	0	18	32

MVP: Tom Brady (QB), New England
32 of 48 passing, 354 yards, 3 TDs

Another Super Bowl classic went the Patriots' way when Adam Vinatieri's 41-yard field goal with four seconds to play lifted New England to its second championship in three years. While it took a Super Bowl-record 26 minutes, 55 seconds for the first points to be scored, the teams eventually combined for 868 total yards – 481 by the Patriots – and had the highest-scoring fourth quarter (37 points) in Super Bowl history. Carolina briefly moved in front on an 85-yard Muhsin Muhammad TD reception and later tied the game on Ricky Proehl's 12-yard scoring catch with 1:08 remaining. But Tom Brady answered by driving the Patriots into field goal range, aided by Deion Branch's clutch 17-yard reception.

SUPER BOWL XXXIX

February 6, 2005
Alltel Stadium | Jacksonville
Attendance: 78,125

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
New England	0	7	7	10	24
Philadelphia	0	7	7	7	21

MVP: Deion Branch (WR), New England
11 receptions, 133 yards

Behind a defense that forced four turnovers – including two fourth-quarter interceptions – the Patriots joined the Cowboys as the only teams to win three Super Bowls in a span of four seasons. New England took the lead for good early in the fourth quarter on a drive sparked by Kevin Faulk, who caught screen passes of 13 and 14 yards and added a 12-yard run. Corey Dillon capped the possession with his 2-yard touchdown run, and after Adam Vinatieri's 22-yard field goal made it 24-14, Tedy Bruschi and Rodney Harrison stepped up with interceptions that sealed the outcome.

SUPER BOWL XL

February 5, 2006
Ford Field | Detroit
Attendance: 68,206

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Seattle	3	0	7	0	10
Pittsburgh	0	7	7	7	21

MVP: Hines Ward (WR), Pittsburgh
5 receptions, 123 yards, 1 TD

The Steelers finally earned their "one for the thumb," becoming the first AFC team to win five Super Bowls. Holding a tenuous 14-10 fourth-quarter lead, the game's key sequence came when cornerback Ike Taylor picked off a pass to stop a Seahawks threat. Pittsburgh quickly cashed in when Antwaan Randle El, a quarterback in college, took a handoff, sprinted right, then stopped and fired a 43-yard strike to Hines Ward for the first Super Bowl TD pass thrown by a wide receiver. In the third quarter, the Steelers' Willie Parker burst free for a Super Bowl-record 75-yard touchdown run.

SUPER BOWL XLI

February 4, 2007
Dolphin Stadium | Miami
Attendance: 74,512

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Indianapolis	6	10	6	7	29
Chicago	14	0	3	0	17

MVP: Peyton Manning (QB), Indianapolis
25 of 38 passing, 247 yards, 1 TD

A wet and wild night of Super Bowl firsts brought Tony Dungy, Peyton Manning, and the Colts to the top of the NFL. Dungy became the first Black head coach to win the Super Bowl while directing the franchise to its first crown since relocating to Indianapolis in 1984. It was also the first Super Bowl title for Manning, whose career saw him set league marks for completions, passing yards, and passing TDs. The game also marked the first time the opening kickoff was run back for a touchdown, accomplished when the Bears' Devin Hester sped 92 yards to give his team the early lead.

SUPER BOWL XLII

February 3, 2008
Univ. of Phoenix Stadium | Glendale
Attendance: 71,101

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
N.Y. Giants	3	0	0	14	17
New England	0	7	0	7	14

MVP: Eli Manning (QB), New York
19 of 34 passing, 255 yards, 2 TDs

The Giants became the first NFC wild card team to win the Super Bowl, an achievement made possible by a relentless defense and David Tyree's brilliant 32-yard catch that set up the go-ahead touchdown. Plaxico Burress capped the winning drive with his 13-yard TD grab with 35 seconds to play, shocking a Patriots squad that entered the game 18-0 and had taken the lead just minutes earlier on Randy Moss' 6-yard touchdown reception. Michael Strahan, playing his final game, keyed a defense that produced five sacks, while the Giants' approach on offense included an opening drive that lasted a Super Bowl-record 9 minutes, 59 seconds.

SUPER BOWL XLIII

February 1, 2009
Raymond James Stadium | Tampa
Attendance: 70,774

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Pittsburgh	3	14	3	7	27
Arizona	0	7	0	16	23

MVP: Santonio Holmes (WR), Pittsburgh
9 receptions, 131 yards, 1 TD

In a game highlighted by clutch plays, the Steelers saved the biggest for last. The Cardinals nearly pulled off what would have been an historic comeback, scoring 16 points in a frenzied fourth quarter and taking the lead on Larry Fitzgerald's 64-yard touchdown catch with 2:37 to play. Pittsburgh answered with a 78-yard drive, winning the game on Ben Roethlisberger's 6-yard scoring pass to Santonio Holmes. The game also saw the Steelers' James Harrison return an interception 100 yards for a touchdown on the final play before halftime.

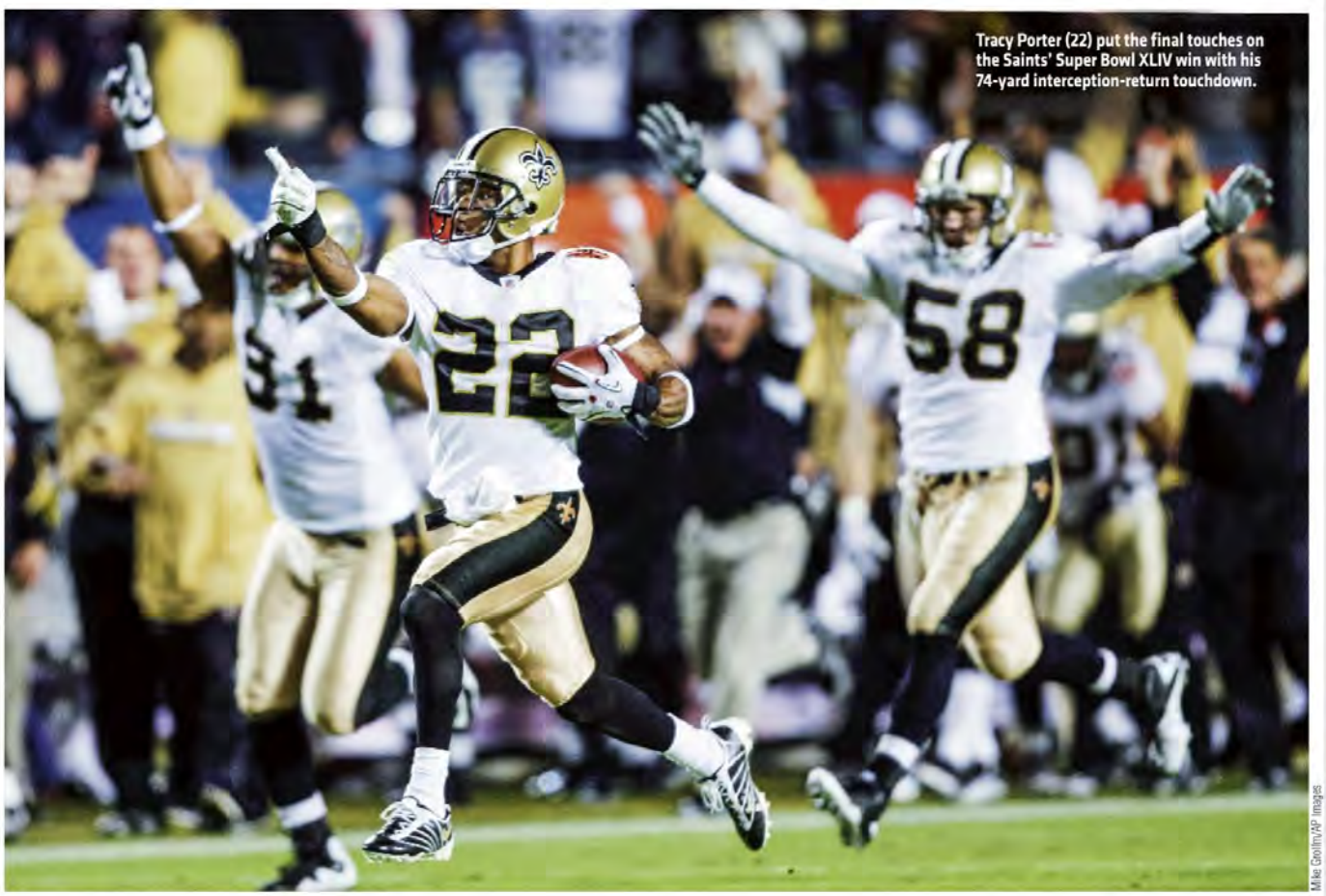
SUPER BOWL XLIV

February 7, 2010
Sun Life Stadium | Miami
Attendance: 74,059

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
New Orleans	0	6	10	15	31
Indianapolis	10	0	7	0	17

MVP: Drew Brees (QB), New Orleans
32 of 39 passing, 288 yards, 2 TDs

Lifting the spirits of a community recovering from Hurricane Katrina, the Saints capped a memorable season by edging the Colts for their first Super Bowl title. They did it with a daring play call to start the second half – an onside kick that was recovered by Chris Reis and set up a six-play drive that Drew Brees finished with a 16-yard TD pass to Pierre Thomas. Jeremy Shockey's fourth-quarter scoring grab moved New Orleans in front to stay, and Tracy Porter put the game away with his 74-yard interception-return touchdown with 3:12 remaining.



Tracy Porter (22) put the final touches on the Saints' Super Bowl XLIV win with his 74-yard interception-return touchdown.

Mike Groll/AP Images

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Clay Matthews (left) and Aaron Rodgers bask in the aftermath of the Packers' Super Bowl XLV triumph over Pittsburgh.

Mark Humphrey/AP Images

SUPER BOWL XLV

February 6, 2011
Cowboys Stadium | Arlington
Attendance: 91,060

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Pittsburgh	0	10	7	8	25
Green Bay	14	7	0	10	31

MVP: Aaron Rodgers (QB), Green Bay
24 of 39 passing, 304 yards, 3 TDs

Aaron Rodgers threw three TD passes and Nick Collins returned an interception for another score, sparking the Packers to their fourth Super Bowl title. The Steelers had trailed, 21-3, but tallied two touchdowns to get close and were on the move again early in the fourth quarter. That's when Green Bay linebacker Clay Matthews stripped the ball from running back Rashard Mendenhall at the Packers 33 and teammate Desmond Bishop recovered. Rodgers then marched Green Bay to a quick TD that extended his team's lead to 28-17.

SUPER BOWL XLVI

February 5, 2012
Lucas Oil Stadium | Indianapolis
Attendance: 68,658

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
N.Y. Giants	9	0	6	6	21
New England	0	10	7	0	17

MVP: Eli Manning (QB), N.Y. Giants
30 of 40 passing, 296 yards, 1 TD

In the first Super Bowl to feature two starting quarterbacks who previously won the big game's MVP Award, Eli Manning and the Giants edged Tom Brady and the Patriots, scoring a late TD for the victory. Manning set a record by opening a Super Bowl with nine consecutive completions; Brady later put together a run of 16 completions in a row, breaking another Super Bowl mark. But with time counting down, Manning directed a nine-play, 88-yard drive that moved New York ahead to stay, capped when Ahmad Bradshaw ran for the winning touchdown with just under a minute to play.

SUPER BOWL XLVII

February 3, 2013
Mercedes-Benz Superdome
New Orleans
Attendance: 71,024

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Baltimore	7	14	7	6	34
San Francisco	3	3	17	8	31

MVP: Joe Flacco (QB), Baltimore
22 of 33 passing, 287 yards, 3 TDs

The Ravens built a big lead and then held on to hand the 49ers their first Super Bowl loss in six appearances. Joe Flacco threw three first-half TDs – capping a stellar 11-touchdown, zero-interception postseason – and Jacoby Jones opened the third quarter with a Super Bowl-record 108-yard kickoff-return touchdown that put Baltimore ahead, 28-6. The 49ers, however, would rally, scoring three second-half TDs and reaching the Ravens 5-yard line before being stopped on downs with under two minutes to play. Baltimore linebacker Ray Lewis added his name to the list of legends whose final game was a Super Bowl victory.

SUPER BOWL XLVIII

February 2, 2014
MetLife Stadium | East Rutherford
Attendance: 82,529

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Seattle	8	14	14	7	43
Denver	0	0	8	0	8

MVP: Malcolm Smith (LB), Seattle
9 tackles, 69-yard interception-return TD

In what was expected to be the first cold-weather Super Bowl – but instead kicked off in pleasant 49-degree conditions at MetLife Stadium – Seattle cruised past the Broncos. The game featured the quickest points to open a Super Bowl; the Seahawks scored on a safety just 12 seconds into the contest. More big plays followed. Seattle LB Malcolm Smith, the first defender in 11 years to be named the game's MVP, broke things open by bringing back a second-quarter interception 69 yards for a TD, and Percy Harvin returned the second-half kickoff 87 yards for another Seattle touchdown, making the score 29-0.

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Gracias a La Ciudad de Los Angeles, al Comité Organizador de LA, a los miles de miembros del staff local, y a los millones de fans aquí y alrededor del mundo quienes hicieron el regreso del Super Bowl a LA inolvidable.

Mucho ha cambiado desde el primer Super Bowl que nació en LA, pero la pasión de los fans y la increíble comunidad local no.

Sus amigos de la NFL.

SUPER BOWL XLIX

February 1, 2015
Univ. of Phoenix Stadium | Glendale
Attendance: 70,288

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
New England	0	14	0	14	28
Seattle	0	14	10	0	24

MVP: Tom Brady (QB), New England
37 of 50 passing, 328 yards, 4 TDs

Tom Brady threw four touchdown passes, including the go-ahead score to Julian Edelman with 2:02 remaining, and Malcolm Butler intercepted a pass at the goal line with 20 seconds left to preserve the Patriots' fourth Super Bowl win. Brady's third TD throw was his 12th in the Super Bowl, breaking Joe Montana's career record. Still, Seattle nearly pulled off an improbable victory, moving deep into New England territory on Jermaine Kearse's acrobatic 33-yard catch, before Butler came up big two plays later, stepping in front of a pass for the game-saving interception. The Patriots became the first team to win the Super Bowl after trailing by double figures in the fourth quarter.

SUPER BOWL 50

February 7, 2016
Levi's Stadium | Santa Clara
Attendance: 71,088

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Carolina	0	7	0	3	10
Denver	10	3	3	8	24

MVP: Von Miller (LB), Denver
6 tackles, 2.5 sacks, 2 forced fumbles

Defense carried the day for the Broncos, who won their third Super Bowl title by flustering a Panthers offense that had scored an NFL-best 500 points during the regular season. Denver recorded seven sacks – equaling the Super Bowl record by a team – and linebacker Von Miller forced a pair of fumbles that led to the team's two TDs. The first was scooped up by teammate Malik Jackson in the end zone for a 10-0 lead; the second set up C.J. Anderson's short scoring run. T.J. Ward did his part, too, with seven tackles and one pass defensed. The victory was the 200th in Peyton Manning's career and made him the first starting QB to win Super Bowls with two different franchises.

SUPER BOWL LI

February 5, 2017
NRG Stadium | Houston
Attendance: 70,807

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	OT	F
New England	0	3	6	19	6	34
Atlanta	0	21	7	0	0	28

MVP: Tom Brady (QB), New England
43 of 62 passing, 466 yards, 2 TDs

New England staged the biggest comeback in Super Bowl history, rallying from a 25-point deficit late in the third quarter to prevail in overtime for the franchise's fifth championship. It would have been hard to imagine such an outcome after Matt Ryan's 6-yard touchdown pass to Tevin Coleman gave Atlanta a 28-3 lead, but Patriots QB Tom Brady – who became the first four-time Super Bowl MVP – made it happen. He threw TD passes to James White and Danny Amendola, Stephen Gostkowski kicked a 33-yard field goal, and a White touchdown run and a two-point conversion then tied it to cap a frantic final 17 minutes of regulation. White won the game with a 2-yard TD run on the first possession of overtime.

SUPER BOWL LII

February 4, 2018
U.S. Bank Stadium | Minneapolis
Attendance: 67,612

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Philadelphia	9	13	7	12	41
New England	3	9	14	7	33

MVP: Nick Foles (QB), Philadelphia
28 of 43 passing, 373 yards, 3 TDs;
1 TD reception

Zach Ertz's touchdown catch with 2:21 remaining put the Eagles ahead, but it took a big defensive play by Brandon Graham and Derek Barnett to preserve the franchise's first Super Bowl victory. Graham strip-sacked QB Tom Brady on the Patriots' next possession and Barnett recovered the loose ball. The game featured 1,151 total yards, the most ever in an NFL game, and Brady threw for a Super Bowl-record 505 yards. MVP Nick Foles became the first player to both throw and catch a TD pass in the Super Bowl.

Tom Brady rallied the Patriots from big fourth-quarter deficits to win Super Bowl XLIX and Super Bowl LI.

Matt Slocum/AP Images

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Travis Kelce was a big reason the Chiefs raised the Lombardi Trophy following Super Bowl LIV.

Jeffrey Phillips/AP Images

Buccaneers head coach Bruce Arians oversaw masterful offensive and defensive efforts in his team's Super Bowl LV victory.

Ashley Landis/AP Images

SUPER BOWL LIII

February 3, 2019
Mercedes-Benz Stadium | Atlanta
Attendance: 70,081

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
New England	0	3	0	10	13
L.A. Rams	0	0	3	0	3

MVP: Julian Edelman (WR), New England
10 receptions, 141 yards

On the heels of the highest-scoring season in NFL history, the Patriots and the Rams tangled in the lowest-scoring Super Bowl ever seen. New England prevailed to capture its sixth Super Bowl crown – all since the 2001 season – to tie the Steelers for the all-time record. Sony Michel accounted for the game's lone touchdown, a 2-yard run midway through the fourth quarter that snapped a 3-3 tie and came one play after QB Tom Brady lofted a perfect pass to Rob Gronkowski for a 29-yard gain. Stephen Gostkowski then added a 41-yard field goal with 1:12 remaining to provide New England with a late cushion. In between those two scores, the Rams marched to the Patriots 27-yard line, but their threat ended when Jared Goff's pass deep down the right side was picked off by Stephon Gilmore.

SUPER BOWL LIV

February 2, 2020
Hard Rock Stadium | Miami
Attendance: 62,417

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
San Francisco	3	7	10	0	20
Kansas City	7	3	0	21	31

MVP: Patrick Mahomes (QB), Kansas City
26 of 42 passing, 286 yards, 2 TDs; 29 yards rushing, 1 TD

Kansas City erupted for three touchdowns in a span of 5:01 late in the fourth quarter to overtake the 49ers and win the franchise's first Super Bowl title in a half century. Patrick Mahomes threw TD passes to Travis Kelce and Damien Williams – the latter putting the Chiefs ahead – and Williams added a 38-yard scoring run with 1:12 remaining to pad the lead. San Francisco had snapped a halftime tie with a 42-yard Robbie Gould field goal and Raheem Mostert's 1-yard TD run, before Kansas City, facing its third double-digit deficit of the postseason, rallied. Williams rushed for a game-high 104 yards and Tyreek Hill caught nine of Mahomes' 26 completions.

SUPER BOWL LV

February 7, 2021
Raymond James Stadium | Tampa
Attendance: 24,835

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Kansas City	3	3	3	0	9
Tampa Bay	7	14	10	0	31

MVP: Tom Brady (QB), Tampa Bay
21 of 29 passing, 201 yards, 3 TDs

Adding another chapter to his legendary career, quarterback Tom Brady directed the Buccaneers to a Super Bowl triumph in his first year with the team. It marked Brady's seventh career title, following six with the Patriots, and the fifth time he won the Rozelle Award as the game's MVP. He threw three first-half touchdown passes, two to longtime teammate Rob Gronkowski and the other to Antonio Brown just six seconds before intermission. Equally impressive was the Tampa Bay defense, which kept the Chiefs, who averaged nearly 30 ppg during the regular season, out of the end zone. Linebacker Devin White paced that effort with 12 tackles and an interception. Played against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic, a crowd of nearly 25,000 was in attendance to see the Bucs become the first team to win the Super Bowl in its home stadium.

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From 1920-1931, the NFL did not have postseason play, but a first-place tie in 1932 forced a "playoff" – and its success led the league to adopt a championship game format a year later. The AFL began play in 1960, and from 1966-1969 (before the merger), the two leagues held separate title games prior to the Super Bowl.

NFL CHAMPIONS

1920 .....Akron Pros
1921.....Chicago Staleys
1922.....Canton Bulldogs
1923.....Canton Bulldogs
1924 .....Cleveland Bulldogs
1925.....Chicago Cardinals
1926.....Frankford Yellow Jackets
1927.....New York Giants
1928 .....Providence Steam Roller
1929.....Green Bay Packers
1930 .....Green Bay Packers
1931.....Green Bay Packers

1932.....@ Chicago Bears 9, Portsmouth Spartans 0
1933.....@ Chicago Bears 23, New York Giants 21
1934 .....@ New York Giants 30, Chicago Bears 13
1935.....@ Detroit Lions 26, New York Giants 7
1936*.....Green Bay Packers 21, Boston Braves 6
1937.....Washington Redskins 28, @ Chicago Bears 21
1938.....@ New York Giants 23, Green Bay Packers 17
1939.....@ Green Bay Packers 27, New York Giants 0
1940 .....Chicago Bears 73, @ Washington Redskins 0
1941.....@ Chicago Bears 37, New York Giants 9
1942 .....@ Washington Redskins 14, Chicago Bears 6
1943 .....@ Chicago Bears 41, Washington Redskins 21
1944 .....Green Bay Packers 14, @ New York Giants 7
1945 .....@ Cleveland Rams 15, Washington Redskins 14
1946 .....Chicago Bears 24, @ New York Giants 14
1947.....@ Chicago Cardinals 28, Philadelphia Eagles 21

Robert Riger/Getty Images

Jim Brown (32) breaks free from Billy Ray Smith Sr. of the Colts during the 1964 NFL Championship Game. Brown rushed for 114 yards in Cleveland's 27-0 victory, the franchise's fourth NFL title.

1948 .....@ Philadelphia Eagles 7, Chicago Cardinals 0
1949 .....Philadelphia Eagles 14, @ Los Angeles Rams 0
1950 .....@ Cleveland Browns 30, Los Angeles Rams 28
1951.....@ Los Angeles Rams 24, Cleveland Browns 17
1952.....Detroit Lions 17, @ Cleveland Browns 7
1953.....@ Detroit Lions 17, Cleveland Browns 16
1954 .....@ Cleveland Browns 56, Detroit Lions 10
1955.....Cleveland Browns 38, @ Los Angeles Rams 14
1956.....@ New York Giants 47, Chicago Bears 7
1957.....@ Detroit Lions 59, Cleveland Browns 14
1958 .....Baltimore Colts 23, @ New York Giants 17 (OT)
1959.....@ Baltimore Colts 31, New York Giants 16
1960 .....@ Philadelphia Eagles 17, Green Bay Packers 13
1961.....@ Green Bay Packers 37, New York Giants 0
1962.....Green Bay Packers 16, @ New York Giants 7
1963.....@ Chicago Bears 14, New York Giants 10
1964 .....@ Cleveland Browns 27, Baltimore Colts 0
1965.....@ Green Bay Packers 23, Cleveland Browns 12

1966 .....Green Bay Packers 34, @ Dallas Cowboys 27
1967.....@ Green Bay Packers 21, Dallas Cowboys 17
1968 .....Baltimore Colts 34, @ Cleveland Browns 0
1969.....@ Minnesota Vikings 27, Cleveland Browns 7

AFL CHAMPIONS

1960 .....@ Houston Oilers 24, Los Angeles Chargers 16
1961.....Houston Oilers 10, @ San Diego Chargers 3
1962.....Dallas Texans 20, @ Houston Oilers 17 (OT)
1963.....@ San Diego Chargers 51, Boston Patriots 10
1964 .....@ Buffalo Bills 20, San Diego Chargers 7
1965.....Buffalo Bills 23, @ San Diego Chargers 0
1966 .....Kansas City Chiefs 31, @ Buffalo Bills 7
1967.....@ Oakland Raiders 40, Houston Oilers 7
1968 .....@ New York Jets 27, Oakland Raiders 23
1969.....Kansas City Chiefs 17, @ Oakland Raiders 7

**Held at the Polo Grounds (New York, N.Y.)*

SOLE SURVIVAL

Getty Images

WHEN THE GIANTS SWITCHED TO SNEAKERS MIDWAY THROUGH THE 1934 NFL CHAMPIONSHIP GAME, THEY CAUGHT THE BEARS FLAT-FOOTED.

BY TOM PELISSERO

As George Halas watched his players slide around the frozen Polo Grounds field, struggling to keep up with the suddenly quick-cutting New York Giants after halftime of the 1934 NFL title game, the legendary Chicago Bears coach shouted a desperate strategy change:

"Step on their feet!"

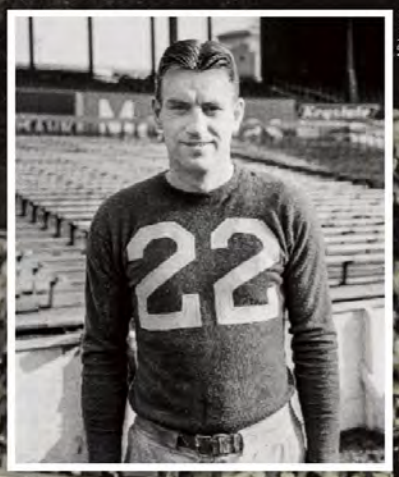
It didn't work, nor did much of anything else Halas and the mighty Bears tried after some quick thinking gave the Giants a grip and sparked the NFL's first big championship game upset 87 seasons ago. Swapping in rubber-soled basketball shoes for some of their key players' normal football cleats, the Giants scored 27 unanswered points in the fourth quarter of a stunning 30-13 triumph in what will forever be known as the "Sneakers Game."

So remarkable was the outcome, according to a *Daily News* report the next day: "A thrill-crazed crowd of 35,059 fans burst through Polo Grounds police barriers, engulfed the frozen field and carried off splintered goal posts and bruised heroes of the New York Giants football team…"

The legend of how the Giants pulled it off has only grown over the years.

The teams had met twice in the regular season – triumphs of 27-7 at Wrigley Field in Chicago and 10-9 two weeks later at the Polo Grounds for the Bears, who outscored opponents 286-86 on their way to a 13-0 regular-season record. They'd won 18 in a row dating back to the previous season – when they beat New York, 23-21, for the title – as they returned to Upper Manhattan for a rematch with the 8-5 Giants.

Getty Images



AP Images

AP Images

Future Pro Football Hall of Famer Bronko Nagurski rushed for a career-high seven touchdowns in 1934 and scored the Bears' first TD in that year's NFL title game against the Giants. Ed Danowski was a rookie quarterback for the Giants in 1934 when he led the team to the NFL championship. He threw for one touchdown and ran for another to rally them past the Bears, 30-13. Ken Strong was a standout kicker and running back who joined the Giants in 1933. He had a big impact on the team's 1934 title game win, rushing for two touchdowns, kicking a field goal, and making three PATs. The three-time All-Pro was enshrined in the Pro Football Hall of Fame in 1967.

The Bears appeared on their way to a third straight NFL championship when they played the Giants at the Polo Grounds in the 1934 title game. But a change of footwear at halftime also changed the course of history.

In his 1979 autobiography, *Halas by Halas*, the man known as "Papa Bear" wrote: "For days rain had fallen. The field was a lake. On Saturday we practiced in the mud. That night, a northeaster swept into New York. When I went to Mass, the thermometer showed 9 degrees. Street puddles had turned to ice. But the sky was clear and as the day passed the warm sun melted the ice. When we arrived at the field, the turf was spongy, with a thin topping of water."

The Giants' treasurer, John Mara, noticed a few hours before kickoff that the field had become frozen and slippery. Mara alerted coach Steve Owen and team captain Ray Flaherty, their All-Pro end who recalled winning a game in similar conditions during his college days at Gonzaga by wearing sneakers. He suggested the Giants try it, too.

"Well, it was a Sunday and [we] couldn't find a sporting goods store in the whole city," the late Wellington Mara, who was 18 at the time and would go on to become the Giants' owner/GM/president, recalled years later. "But we had working with us a tailor named Abe Cohen. He volunteered to go up to Manhattan College and get the basketball shoes from the basketball team."

AP Images

A Giants player puts on sneakers during the 1934 NFL title game. A team employee retrieved several pairs of sneakers to give Giants players better traction on the icy field at the Polo Grounds.

Some mystery has persisted over what happened next. One popular version of the legend was perpetuated by Wellington Mara, who recalled the diminutive Cohen "had to break open the door to the locker room, break open many of the lockers" at the school to procure the sneakers. Halas' book told a similar tale that "a Giants emissary had broken into lockers at Manhattan College and taken nine pairs of tennis shoes, all he could find."

Amy Surak, director of archives and special collections at Manhattan College, says there was no theft.

"Abe Cohen, the supposed culprit, was a clubhouse attendant who hung around the Giants dressing room as well as a tailor who helped sew the Manhattan College football uniforms," Surak wrote in an email.

"Francis 'Doc' Sweeney, MD (Manhattan College Class of 1916) was the medical doctor for the Giants. He was also the doctor for the Manhattan College athletic department. He was also the brother-in-law of Steve Owen, the coach of the N.Y. Giants. Gus Mauch did double duty as the Giants trainer as well as the Manhattan College trainer…

"Between Doc Sweeney, Abe Cohen, Gus Mauch, and Steve Owen and the overwhelming Manhattan College connection, the decision was made for Abe Cohen to head up to Manhattan College and fetch basketball sneakers – he had a key to the equipment room."

Some reports have said Cohen took the subway to the school, located in the Bronx roughly six miles from the Polo Grounds. But records from 1934 say Cohen hailed a cab, according to Surak.

Either way, the sneakers were ready for the Giants at halftime. The Bears led 10-3 by then, powered by star fullback Bronko Nagurski's 1-yard touchdown plunge – and it could have been more, Halas later wrote, if not for penalties erasing two other Nagurski scoring runs and a rare missed field-goal attempt by "Automatic Jack" Manders.

When the teams emerged from the locker room after halftime, "the shadows cast by the bleachers were creeping onto the field," Halas wrote. "It got awfully cold. In the shadows the ground was freezing, not into ridges but into a slick sheet. Three or four of the Giants came out wearing tennis shoes!"

There weren't enough sneakers for the entire Giants team, so Owen ordered them to be worn by his ends and backs, including Pro Football Hall of Fame back Ken Strong, who doubled as New York's kicker. The Bears laughed when Strong's first kick while wearing sneakers squirted sideways out of bounds, Halas wrote. Strong's next kick sailed into the end zone, and the Bears stopped laughing.

After Chicago pushed its lead to 13-3 in the third quarter, the teams switched ends for the fourth.

"The shadow now covered all of our end of the field," Halas wrote. "I wish I could forget the fourth quarter."

Giants quarterback Ed Danowski threw a 28-yard touchdown pass to Ike Frankian. Strong kicked the extra point, then put the Giants ahead when he sprinted for a 42-yard TD. Strong ran for another TD and Danowski scored on a 9-yard scamper as New York pulled away.

While the sneakered Giants cut well on the ice, the Bears "were slipping and sliding all (over)," Giants All-Pro back Harry Newman said years later in an interview. "They couldn't touch anybody actually. (It was) a runner's utopia."

Bears end Luke Johnsos recalled in Halas' autobiography: "Some (Chicago) players took off their shoes. That helped a little but not much. I kept my shoes on. I had holes in my socks. We just flip-flopped around. The Giants could go anywhere they wished."

The Giants ended up outgaining the Bears 276-165, including 173 rushing yards on 37 carries. Strong's 94 yards led all rushers.

"They just outsmarted us I guess," Nagurski said with a chuckle in an interview years later.

Twenty-two years later, in the 1956 NFL title game at Yankee Stadium, the Giants again wore basketball shoes against the cleated Bears, who fell behind 27 points before changing into their own sneakers at halftime. New York won in a 47-7 rout.

But there was only one "Sneakers Game" – and Halas never forgot how a championship and unbeaten season had slipped away.

"It was a freakish way to lose, but it was legal and it cost us the championship!" he wrote in his autobiography. "At training camp the next fall, a big box arrived 'COD' addressed to me. It was filled with tennis shoes. Must have been a hundred pairs, all worn, with holes in the soles. I never did learn who sent it. But I swore that no Bear ever would go another game without two pairs of tennis shoes in his equipment bag."

***Tom Pelissero** is a reporter for NFL Network who has covered the NFL since 2003. He lives outside Minneapolis with his wife and two daughters.*

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FAMILIES FIRST

WHEN IT COMES TO SHARING SUPER BOWL EXPERIENCES, KINSHIP TRIUMPHS OVER COMPETITION.

BY JEFFRI CHADIHA

Twins Devin (left) and Jason McCourty shared the joy of winning a championship while playing for the Patriots in Super Bowl LIII. It marked the third Super Bowl title for Devin and the first for Jason.

Scott Boehm/AP Images

Devin McCourty couldn't help himself.

As the final seconds of Super Bowl LIII ticked off, he glanced over at his twin, Jason, to see how his brother was handling the excitement. Devin knew what it was like to be on the verge of winning a championship; he'd been a standout safety for the New England Patriots in two previous Super Bowl victories. As he watched Jason kneel and close his eyes before praying, Devin sensed his sibling was savoring every second of this moment.

Devin sidled over and wrapped Jason in a warm embrace once the outcome against the Los Angeles Rams was no longer in doubt. He also chuckled as his brother felt confetti showering over his shoulder pads. Once Jason's children and wife found him in the middle of the mayhem, Devin knew this championship topped anything else he'd ever won in the NFL.

"For me, it was just special to watch him experience all of that," Devin says.

What the McCourty brothers understood was that they had become part of a rare breed. It's hard enough for any NFL player to win a Super Bowl. To say someone else in your family was lucky enough to feel that same level of glory is even more extraordinary. As one might expect, the family bonds that are part of Super Bowl history cover an assortment of connections.

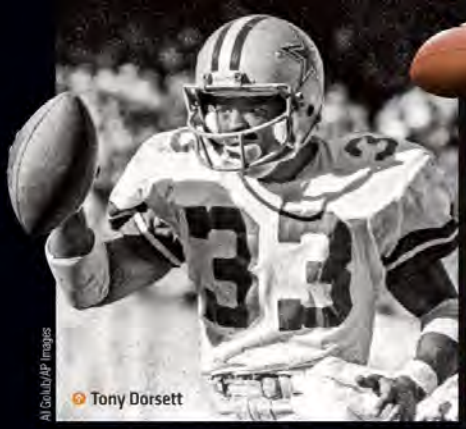
The Manning brothers (quarterbacks Peyton and Eli) both won two championships, while the Kelce brothers (Kansas City Chiefs tight end Travis and Philadelphia Eagles center Jason) each have claimed one. John and Jim Harbaugh became the first siblings to meet as opposing head coaches in a Super Bowl, when John's Baltimore Ravens beat Jim's San Francisco 49ers in Super Bowl XLVII.

There also has been a father and son who won Super Bowls with the same franchise (Steve and Zak DeOssie with the New York Giants), a family of punters who all earned titles (Craig Colquitt and sons Britton and Dustin), and a couple Hall of Fame linemen who joyfully watched their kids compete on football's grandest stage (Howie and Chris Long; Bruce and Jake Matthews).

"I have so many teammates who've asked me about it," says Steve DeOssie, a linebacker for the Giants during their 1990 championship season. "They know what it means to win a Super Bowl. At first, it was hard to explain to them that as good as it felt to win our Super Bowl (XXV, over the Buffalo Bills), it was even better to see my son win. As we've gotten older, a lot of the guys have come to understand that."

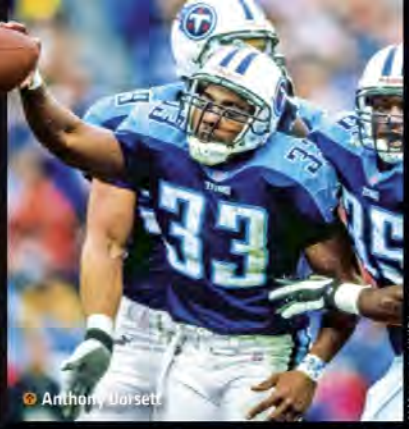
DeOssie actually saw Zak win two Super Bowls – the Giants beat the Patriots in Super Bowls XLII and XLVI. Steve was so nervous in that first meeting that he could barely stand to watch his son's appearances on the field as the Giants' long snapper. Every time Zak crouched down to prepare for a punt or kick, Steve closed his eyes and wished for the best. The father knew how much went into winning that game, and he also understood how easily one mistake could crush a team's chances.

The elder DeOssie eventually navigated his way through security to find a spot behind the Giants' bench in the waning moments of that upset win. He kept waving to get Zak's attention until the son looked back and Steve yelled, "I think you're going to win!"



Al Golub/AP Images

Tony Dorsett



Anthony Dorsett

Al Messerschmidt/AP Images

SETS OF BROTHERS WHO HAVE REACHED THE SUPER BOWL (32)

Jonathan (Falcons LI) and Jordan Babineaux (Seahawks XL)
Chris (Raiders XV, XVIII) and Matt Bahr (Steelers XIV; Giants XXV)
Ronde (Buccaneers XXXVII) and Tiki Barber (Giants XXXV)
Martellus (Patriots LI) and Michael Bennett (Seahawks XLVIII, XLIX)
Glenn (Dolphins XVII, XIX) and Lyle Blackwood (Dolphins XVII, XIX)
Pete (Patriots XX) and Stan Brock (Chargers XXIX)
Ruben (Bears XLI) and Cornell Brown (Ravens XXXV)
Peter (Ravens XXXV) and Michael Boulware (Seahawks XL)
Brent (Eagles LII) and Garrett Celek (49ers XLVII)
Britton (Broncos XLVIII, 50) and Dustin Colquitt (Chiefs LIV)
Zack (Raiders XXXVII) and Henri Crockett (Falcons XXXIII)
Kevin (Titans XXXIV; Panthers XXXVIII) and Andre Dyson (Seahawks XL)
Jim (49ers XXIII) and Keith Fahnhorst (49ers XVI, XIX)
Archie (Bengals XVI), Keith (Washington XXII), and Ray Griffin (Bengals XVI)
Charley (Raiders XVIII) and John Hannah (Patriots XX)
Derrick (49ers XIX) and Ronnie Harmon (Chargers XXIX)
Kris (Panthers XXXVIII) and Cullen Jenkins (Packers XLV)
Arthur (Ravens XLVII) and Chandler Jones (Patriots XLIX)
Jason (Eagles LII) and Travis Kelce (Chiefs LIV, LV)
Chris (Steelers XLIII, XLV) and Ma'ake Kemoeatu (Ravens XLVII)
Brian (Patriots XXXVIII) and Todd Kinchen (Falcons XXXIII*)
Eli (Giants XLII, XLVI) and Peyton Manning (Colts XLI, XLIV; Broncos XLVIII, 50)
Devin (Patriots XVI, XLIX, LI, LII, LIII) and Jason McCourty (Patriots LIII)
Cle (Raiders XVIII) and Wilbert Montgomery (Eagles XV)
Gloster (Chiefs IV; Cowboys VI*) and Willie Richardson (Colts III)
Darren (Packers XXXII; Saints XLIV) and Jamie Sharper (Ravens XXXV)
Bubba (Colts III, V) and Tody Smith (Cowboys VI)
Malcolm (Seahawks XLVIII, XLIX) and Steve Smith (Giants XLII)
Jonathan (Saints XLIV) and Matt Stinchcomb (Raiders XXXVIII)
Jeff (Dolphins XVII, XIX) and Loren Toews (Steelers IX, X, XIII, XIV)
Terron (Falcons LI*) and T.J. Ward (Broncos 50)
Doug (Broncos XXIV) and Dave Widell (Falcons XXXIII*)

FATHERS AND SONS WHO HAVE REACHED THE SUPER BOWL (20)

Father: Julius Adams (Patriots XX); Son: Keith (Eagles XXXIX)
Father: Perry Brooks (Washington XVII, XVIII); Son: Ahmad (49ers XLVII)
Father: Ross Browner (Bengals XVI); Son: Max Starks (Steelers XL, XLIII)
Father: Reg Carolan (Chiefs I); Son: Brett (49ers XXIX*)
Father: Jeremiah Castille (Broncos XXXII); Son: Tim (Cardinals XLIII*)
Father: Craig Colquitt (Steelers XIII, XIV); Sons: Britton (Broncos XLVIII, 50), Dustin (Chiefs LIV)
Father: Frank Cornish (Dolphins VI); Son: Frank (Cowboys XXVII, XXVIII)
Father: Bruce Davis (Raiders XV, XVIII); Son: Bruce (Steelers XLIII*)
Father: Steve DeOssie (Giants XXV); Son: Zak (Giants XLII, XLVI)
Father: Tony Dorsett (Cowboys XII, XIII); Son: Anthony (Titans XXXIV; Raiders XXXVII)
Father: Guy Frazier (Bengals XVI); Son: Andre (Steelers XLIII)
Father: Bob Griese (Dolphins VI, VII, VIII); Son: Brian (Broncos XXXIII*; Bears XLI*)
Father: Don Hasselbeck (Raiders XVIII); Son: Matt (Seahawks XL)
Father: Howie Long (Raiders XVIII); Son: Chris (Patriots LI; Eagles LII)
Father: Bruce Matthews (Titans XXXIV); Son: Jake (Falcons LI)
Father: Emery Moorehead (Bears XX); Son: Aaron (Colts XLI)
Father: Jackie Slater (Rams (XIV); Son: Matthew (Patriots XLVI, XLIX, LI, LII, LIII)
Father: Mosi Tatupu (Patriots XX); Son: Lofa (Seahawks XL)
Father: Jessie Tuggle (Falcons XXXIII); Son: Grady Jarrett (Falcons LI)
Father: Manu Tuiasosopo (49ers XIX); Son: Marques (Raiders XXXVII*) *Did not play

Eric Bleier/Getty Images

The Harbaughs experienced a much different feeling after Super Bowl XLVII concluded. When John jogged out to midfield to shake his younger brother's hand, Jim sternly said, "There will be no hug. … Congratulations."

In fairness to Jim, losing the biggest game of one's life wasn't any easier with his brother on the winning side.

On the other hand, a reporter asked Peyton Manning about the significance of earning his second championship in Denver's win over Carolina in Super Bowl 50, a victory that gave Peyton as many rings as Eli. Manning's response to the inquiry about a perceived sibling rivalry: "We don't do that. Maybe you guys, your brothers do that. That's not what we do."

Peyton's reaction echoes a sentiment most family members convey when it comes to sharing a Super Bowl memory. It's mainly about love, encouragement, and support. DeOssie actually worried so much about ruining Zak's preparation before Super Bowl XLII that he refrained from texting his son the same message he'd sent three hours prior to every game Zak played: "Good luck. Play hard. Love You." Then Steve settled into his seat and heard his cell phone chime two hours before kickoff.

"It was Zak," Steve says. "He told me to send the message."

That sense of knowing exactly what a loved one needs is what connects most family members at the Super Bowl. As Jason McCourty says, "Aside from my wife, Devin is the only other

Left: John (left) and Jim Harbaugh became the first brothers to face each other in the Super Bowl as head coaches. **Right:** Howie Long (left) congratulates his son Chris following SB LII.

Patrick Smith/AP Images

person in the world who knows exactly what I've gone through to win a championship. The frustrations. All the ups and downs. It means a lot more to say I won one with him."

The McCourty brothers never dreamed of winning a Super Bowl together. They weren't highly touted players as their careers evolved – Devin received just one college scholarship offer while Jason wasn't even invited to the scouting combine prior to the 2009 NFL Draft – so they focused on simpler goals. Playing as long as possible was their primary hope.

It turned out that Devin enjoyed a more direct ride to success. He became a first-round pick of the Patriots in 2010; Jason was a sixth-round selection by Tennessee a year earlier. Devin also competed in three Super Bowls in his first seven seasons in the league. Jason, on the other hand, only enjoyed two winning campaigns in his eight years with the Titans before signing with the Cleveland Browns, who promptly went 0-16 in his only season there.

Jealousy easily could have crept into their relationship. Instead, the McCourty brothers continually stood by one another. When the Patriots played the Giants in Super Bowl XLVI, Jason was tickled just to have a seat at the game. He was the one handling ticket requests, organizing family dinners, and giving Devin a chance to focus on his first opportunity to compete in the NFL's biggest game.

Devin was equally supportive, particularly when Jason became a free agent following the 2016 season. "I told him he needed to go to a contender," Devin says. "But he also had three kids by that point, and he was thinking about where he was going to live. Then Cleveland offered him a two-year deal."

Adds Jason, who wound up in New England after a trade in 2018 and now plays for Miami: "Most of the guys I played with never won championships (in the NFL). Most people don't even get the chance. So when I left Tennessee, I thought it just wasn't in the cards for me."

The Colquitt brothers can relate. Britton played in two Super Bowls within his first six years with Denver – a loss to Seattle in Super Bowl XLVIII and that win in Super Bowl 50 – but Dustin needed 15 seasons in Kansas City before the Chiefs beat the 49ers in Super Bowl LIV. As the Chiefs celebrated, Dustin sat with his family at their hotel and savored the win.

As Dustin says, "I finally had the chance to talk about my Super Bowl stories with everyone."

Similar to Devin McCourty, Craig (who was part of the Pittsburgh Steelers' Super Bowl XIII and XIV championship teams) and Britton sorely wanted to see Dustin win his own title. In fact, Britton says the best part of watching Kansas City's victory was "knowing that my father could say he has two sons who have Super Bowl rings just like him."

Adds Dustin: "People talked about the odds of my dad having two Super Bowl rings, and then his two sons win championships. I remember growing up and having friends say it would be great if we could play football at the University of Tennessee like our dad (which they did). Now people say we've surpassed all that."

The McCourty brothers have heard similar congratulations. They also chuckle when thinking about how giddy Jason was during the time between their AFC Championship Game win and their trip to Atlanta for Super Bowl LIII. He peppered Devin with questions and was stunned that a logistics meeting lasted less than an hour. Jason's takeaway: The Patriots had been to so many Super Bowls that they didn't need to waste much time worrying about ticket requests and travel needs for family members.

Now that Jason and Devin both have their own championship rings, they appreciate all the things that led up to that big day. Those moments were a prelude to a surreal time in their lives, one that made them part of a fraternity that will always be exclusive.

"We do think about it a lot more now that we're at a certain point in our careers," Devin says. "You start thinking about everything you've been through, from Pop Warner to high school to college and now. We're still focused on what we have to do today, but we don't take that (accomplishment) for granted. To win a Super Bowl with your family, it's definitely something special."

Jeffri Chadiba *is a senior writer for NFL.com and an on-air talent for NFL Network. He also has worked for ESPN,* Sports Illustrated, *and co-authored one book.*

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PLAY:60 15 YEARS AND STILL MOVING

FOR 15 YEARS (SINCE 2007), THE NFL PLAY 60 INITIATIVE has served as the league's national youth health and wellness initiative to encourage millions of kids across the country to get physically active for at least 60 minutes a day and to fuel the body with nutritious foods. With more than $352 million committed to youth health and fitness through PLAY 60 programming, grants, and awareness campaigns, the NFL, its 32 clubs, and its PLAY 60 partners have provided more than 38 million children the resources they need to boost their activity levels by supporting programs in over 73,000 schools and constructing more than 265 youth fitness zones nationwide.

With the continued impact of COVID-19, the NFL and its PLAY 60 partners – including the American Heart Association (AHA), Fuel Up to Play 60, GoNoodle, and Special Olympics – have teamed up to provide parents, teachers, and students with free digital resources to stay physically active and healthy. These online resources, specifically designed to help students lead healthy lifestyles no matter where they are learning, can be accessed on **nfl.com/play60**.

Fuel Up to Play 60, the leading in-school health and wellness program launched by the NFL and the National Dairy Council (which was founded by dairy farmers, in collaboration with the USDA), has empowered students and educators to work together to build healthier schools and students for more than 10 years. With school looking different the past two years, the program introduced new digital resources, including the Fuel Up to Play 60 Homeroom, with an assortment of fun videos featuring NFL players and learning activities on health and wellness, a greener planet, and building strong communities. Learn more at **fueluptoplay60.com** or download the Student Zone app.

The **American Heart Association** and the NFL have provided free digital programming that delivers physical activity-themed content to students in the classroom and at home. The American Heart Association and the NFL, in collaboration with **GoNoodle**, have provided PLAY 60-inspired video content, classroom curriculum, family challenges, and an interactive PLAY 60 app that can keep kids active regardless of what format they are experiencing school this year. Rooted in science, PLAY 60 digital content prioritizes physical and mental wellness to help children create healthy routines and habits that are fun for the whole family. Visit **heart.org/nflplay60** for more information.

Special Olympics and the NFL continue to team up to provide athletes with intellectual disabilities opportunities to PLAY 60 through virtual exercise videos, with a focus on Unified flag football. Despite delays of reopening in-person sports events across the country due to the pandemic, the NFL, Special Olympics, and NFL clubs have found innovative ways to provide these resources to Special Olympics athletes across our country.

The NFL and its partners are continuing their commitment to the PLAY 60 movement for an active and healthier generation for years to come. To learn more, visit **nfl.com/play60**.

NFL Foundation Invests In Us

THE NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE FOUNDATION is a nonprofit organization dedicated to improving the lives of those touched by the game of football. The NFL Foundation – in conjunction with the NFL's 32 clubs – supports the health, safety, and wellness of athletes across all levels, including youth football and the communities that support the game.

The NFL Foundation manages nearly 50 grant and recognition programs in support of its mission. In 2021, the Foundation issued a record number of grants, including youth and high school football support grants, social justice grants, national partnership support focused on player health and safety, and efforts to support players' philanthropic efforts. The NFL Foundation is central to the league's ongoing efforts to make a positive impact in communities across the country.

The NFL Foundation also funds and supports evidence-based youth character, social, and emotional learning (SEL) initiatives, social justice programming at the grassroots and national level, and year-round support of the league's on-field cause campaigns: Crucial Catch, Salute to Service, and Inspire Change. The Foundation also continues to play a key role in recovery and relief efforts following major disasters around the country, providing financial resources and in-kind media to support fundraising for national nonprofits, including the CDC Foundation, United Way, and American Red Cross.

The ability to access computers and the internet has become

increasingly important. Unfortunately, there is a growing gap between the underprivileged members of society, especially the poor, rural, elderly, and persons with disabilities, who do not have access to computers or the internet. The NFL Foundation, in partnership with all 32 clubs, provides financial support, education, equipment, and infrastructure through a new grant program aimed at reducing the digital divide in our clubs' local communities.

For more information on NFL Foundation programs and their impact, visit **nflfoundation.org**.

SUPER BOWL LEGACY GRANT: 56 GRASSROOTS ORGANIZATIONS RECOGNIZED

Each year, the NFL, via the NFL Foundation, seeks to improve the Super Bowl host community through its Super Bowl Legacy Grant initiative by awarding a $1 million grant matched by the Super Bowl Host Committee and allocated to nonprofit organizations in the surrounding community.

This year, the **Super Bowl LVI Legacy Program** – *Champions Live Here* – recognized 56 "unsung hero" grassroots organizations through grant assistance and other support for making a transformative impact in their communities. Over the past eight months, the team has showcased these unsung heroes by harnessing the spotlight of the Super Bowl's long-awaited return to the region. Each organization – whose work touches all 88 cities in Los Angeles County – received a $10,000 grant, professionally produced spotlight video, and public recognition of their work. Six of these organizations received a total grant award of $50,000 to make an even bigger impact in their community.

The 56 Champions – changemakers and inspirational leaders that embody the region's diversity – represent communities across Los Angeles County's 4,753 square miles. The organizations cover a broad spectrum of needs, with nearly 50% working specifically with young people and on youth development, and more than 25% working on health, mental health, and overall wellness.

The Super Bowl LVI Legacy Program is a partnership between the Los Angeles Super Bowl Host Committee, the LA84 Foundation, the Play Equity Fund, and the National Football League (NFL) Foundation. The initiative was launched to use the spotlight of Super Bowl LVI to showcase the achievements of local community organizations that often go unrecognized.

You can view all 56 spotlight videos and learn more about the Super Bowl LVI Legacy organizations at **lasuperbowlhc.com**.

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Highlighting Latino Fan Engagement

POR LA CULTURA

THE NFL CONTINUES TO EXPAND ITS PLATFORM of customized offerings for the growing fan base of more than 30 million Latinos. This diverse programming includes: NFL **El Snap** Instagram & Tik Tok (bilingual/bicultural), **Mundo NFL** YouTube, NFL Español Twitter (Spanish dominant), and **nfl.com/español**, which feature exclusive NFL content highlighting Latino football stories; and multi-platform Spanish-language and media partnerships with Telemundo, NBC Universo, ESPN Deportes, FOX Deportes, and Entravision.

Throughout 2021, the NFL celebrated Latino communities that have made their mark on the sport of football, on and off the field. Like the Latino community, the NFL is devoted to achieving excellence and cultivating diversity. Early on in the season, the league launched the ÑFL Por La Cultura initiative, which is its way of paying homage to and celebrating this community and elevating Latino culture. The NFL has partnered with the Hispanic Heritage Foundation to inspire and propel youth toward achieving their dreams and build a unified path to greatness through sport. For more on this initiative, visit **nfl.com/porlacultura**.

For NFL news, videos, articles, analysis, and more updates in Spanish, visit **nfl.com/español**.

MEET THE NFL'S GREEN TEAM

NFL GREEN

The Super Bowl has been recognized as America's greenest professional sports championship – and with good reason. The NFL has been addressing the game's environmental impact since 1993 and expanding its efforts ever since. Numerous environmental initiatives are in place for Super Bowl LVI.

- Nearly a dozen community greening projects have been implemented in partnership with the Los Angeles Super Bowl Host Committee, Verizon, and the Los Angeles Rams. They include urban tree plantings to provide shade and beauty, creation of community vegetable gardens in under-resourced neighborhoods, and habitat restoration. In partnership with Verizon, 5,600 trees are being planted for Super Bowl LVI to reforest areas damaged by wildfires in the Angeles and Los Padres National Forests.
- The NFL is working with Force Blue, a group of retired military special ops veterans, on a kelp forest restoration project to help revitalize one of California's most iconic and important marine ecosystems. The project brings together military veterans, marine scientists, researchers, and community volunteers to remove invasives and revitalize a football field-sized area of kelp forest off Cabrillo Beach in San Pedro. A documentary about the NFL's recent work with Force Blue to restore a coral reef off Florida's coast will be shared with active and retired military at a Salute to Service event during Super Bowl Week.
- *Super Kids – Super Sharing*, co-sponsored by the Los Angeles Super Bowl Host Committee, Los Angeles Chargers, Los Angeles Rams, the YMCA of Metropolitan Los Angeles, and Verizon, collected books, sports equipment, games, and school supplies for local children in traditionally under-resourced areas.
- Extra food from Super Bowl Week events is being collected and donated in partnership with the Los Angeles Food Bank and the Los Angeles Mission. Reusable materials – décor, carpet, signs, lumber, and other items – will be collected after Super Bowl events and donated locally for reuse and repurposing with support from the Salvation Army.
- Waste from Super Bowl events is being reduced through recycling. A fan engagement project called "Recycle and Win" aims to catch lucky fans in the act of recycling during the game and reward them with a unique gift. Renewable energy certificates (RECs) are being used to offset energy usage at major event facilities.

You can learn more about NFL Green initiatives at **nfl.com/causes/nfl-green**.

David Shaw (left), VP, Head of Media Operations, NFL Media in Los Angeles, spoke at the Business Connect Executive Networking Event in December.

BUSINESS CONNECT: FORMULA FOR SUCCESS

NFL BUSINESS CONNECT

The NFL Business Connect Program has established itself as one of the cornerstones of Los Angeles' master plan to rebuild its live events industry post-COVID-19. Working in conjunction with the Los Angeles Sports & Entertainment Commission (LASEC), Business Connect identified 225 local, diverse-owned event production service companies to compete for contract work related to Super Bowl LVI.

The contracts awarded ranged from gameday security and transportation to furniture for VIP parties, providing food for special celebrity guests, staging, lights, and entertainment acts. Leading up to these contracting opportunities, the suppliers participated in a 17-month professional development series to ensure that member companies were prepared to best showcase their goods and services, equipped to be competitive for Super Bowl contracts, and are positioned to compete for future special event opportunities in their home market.

As part of that goal, the Business Connect program leveraged its annual Executive Networking Event to get participants one-on-one face time with the executives of high-level companies responsible for hiring for those events.

"I've never thought that the companies that I admired and follow on social media would be in the same room as me!" said Cecilia Zavala, Event Producer, Be Social Productions. "It's great getting to know all these businesses."

Kathryn Schloessman, President & CEO of the Los Angeles Sports & Entertainment Commission, explained that even with all that the Super Bowl brings to a city, it's programs like Business Connect that offer a legacy to the women, minority, LGBTQ, and veteran-owned business community in Los Angeles.

"The Super Bowl isn't just about the game," Schloessman said. "To be truly successful for the whole community, major events like the Super Bowl have to bring jobs. They must bring opportunities. That's what Business Connect does."

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INSPIRE CHANGE

Open to all teams and players, Inspire Change, the NFL's social justice initiative, acknowledges the ways that systemic racism contributes to barriers to opportunity and equality.

The NFL, clubs, and players are committed to creating progress in the areas of education, economic advancement, police-community relations, and criminal justice reform.

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LEARN MORE AT NFL.COM/INSPIRECHANGE

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City Year
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Engaging Our Communities

NFL INSPIRE CHANGE

THE NFL EMBRACES ITS ROLE in unifying communities and serving as a force for positive change. The league and its teams are committed to implementing consistent and thoughtful responses to societal issues by educating the NFL family, instituting transparent policies, and actively engaging with communities to positively impact society.

Open to all teams and players, the league's Inspire Change social justice efforts include an ongoing acknowledgement of the ways that systemic racism contributes to barriers to opportunity and equality. Its work, in conjunction with teams, players, and the Players Coalition, encompasses programs and initiatives in four key areas: Education; Economic Advancement; Community-Police Relations; and the Criminal Justice System.

The NFL is proud to support the ongoing efforts by its 31 social justice grant partners, addressing everything from bail reform to mentorship for underserved communities. Learn more about its grant partners and ongoing social justice work by visiting **nfl.com/inspirechange**.

In addition, the league focuses its efforts on social issues that include character education as well as domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking prevention.

All NFL and team employees and personnel – more than 6,000 in total – participated in year seven of social responsibility education during the 2021 season. Additionally, the NFL continues its support for its partners at the National Sexual Violence Resource Center (NSVRC) and the National Domestic Violence Hotline (The Hotline).

For more information about the NFL's work on social issues, visit **nfl.com/community**.

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PLAYER HEALTH & SAFETY

THE NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE is committed to improving the diagnosis, prevention, and treatment of sports-related injuries; enhancing medical protocols; refining how the game is taught and played; and protecting players' overall health, safety, and well-being. Here is a sampling of these efforts:

PLAYER HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Preventing the Spread of Infectious Disease: Even before the COVID-19 pandemic began, the NFL worked with epidemiologists and infectious disease experts to prevent the spread of infection in the NFL team environment and to prepare for potential viral outbreaks. When the pandemic emerged, the NFL, together with the National Football League Players Association (NFLPA), established a COVID Medical Advisory Task Force made up of medical experts and clinicians to develop safety protocols, which have evolved based on changing circumstances. As of January 2022, nearly 95% of NFL players were vaccinated and nearly 100% of NFL personnel were vaccinated.

Driving Innovative Medical Research: In July 2021, the NFL's Scientific Advisory Board announced a four-year, $4 million award to a team of medical researchers led by the University of Wisconsin who are investigating the prevention and treatment of hamstring injuries in elite football players.

In early 2022, the NFL-NFLPA Joint Pain Management Committee and NFL Research and Innovation Committee awarded a total of $1 million in research funding to the University of California San Diego to investigate the effects of cannabinoids on pain management and to the University of Regina to study neuroprotection from concussion in elite football players.

EQUIPMENT, DATA, AND INNOVATION

NFL Helmet Challenge: After nearly two years of research, development, and deliberation, in October 2021 the NFL awarded three teams – Kollide, Impressio, and Xenith – a total of $1.55 million in grant funding to advance their innovative helmet technologies and help bring them to players as soon as possible. Helmet Challenge submissions – which used exciting new innovations such as computer modeling, novel materials, and 3-D printing – achieved up to a 13% improvement above the top-performing helmet currently worn in the NFL. This rate of improvement represents more than four times what is typically seen annually in new helmet designs. The Helmet Challenge is just one of the many ways the league is improving head safety for players on the field. Thanks to improvements to equipment, training methods, and rules changes, there has been a sustained 25% reduction in concussions since 2017.

Using Mouthguard Sensors to Gather Data: The NFL is partnering with four Division I research universities to expand its collection of data regarding on-field head impacts to inform injury reduction efforts at the pro and collegiate levels. This season, football players from these schools wore high-tech mouthguard sensors that collect kinematic data, including impact speed, direction, force, location, and severity. The data will help inform the NFL's approach to injury reduction, including from head impacts.

NFL/AWS Artificial Intelligence Challenges: The NFL and Amazon Web Services (AWS) – as part of their "Digital Athlete" project, an injury prevention and prediction tool – recently completed an artificial intelligence competition that produced groundbreaking new computer vision models that automate the identification of players involved in helmet impacts in NFL game footage, a process that is currently conducted manually. This will allow the NFL to analyze more helmet impacts faster – beyond those that lead to diagnosed concussions – providing unprecedented insight into players' risk of injury-causing events.

COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS TO PRIORITIZE MENTAL WELLNESS

NFL Total Wellness encompasses a peer-to-peer holistic approach to the care of players and serves as a resource for wellness-related education, crisis management, clinical referrals, and consultation for all members of the NFL community. Total Wellness works closely with the NFLPA and all 32 Team Behavioral Health Clinicians to ensure optimal integration of mental health resources at each club through the joint Behavioral Health Program. NFL Total Wellness also provides guidance to expand and enhance clinical services offered through the Cigna Work/Life Resources EAP and the NFL Life Line – a free, confidential, and independently managed resource that connects members of the NFL family with trained counselors available for in-the-moment problem solving 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year.

Additional mental wellness resources are available to players through the NFL Player Care Foundation and the Professional Athletes Foundation, as well as the Trust, powered by the NFLPA.

LEARN MORE

Stay on top of the latest news and innovations in the NFL's player health and safety efforts by visiting **nfl.com/playerhealthandsafety**.

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MADD AND THE NFL TEAM UP FOR THE MOST VALUABLE POSITION

Did you know that each day people drive drunk over 300,000 times? Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) is zeroing in on a day when there are no more victims of impaired driving. Through education and awareness campaigns and new advancements in auto technology, the end of drunk and drugged driving is closer than ever.

For 12 years, MADD and the NFL have teamed up to promote safe decision-making and impaired driving prevention at stadiums on gameday and in preseason training. MADD and the NFL have a game plan that focuses on MADD's lifesaving message: "If you drink, don't drive."

Over the past five years, more than one million NFL fans have taken the Most Valuable Position (MVP) pledge to be a non-drinking designated driver – a concept MADD popularized 35 years ago. Also, MADD and the NFL have engaged players and team staff through meaningful discussions, training, and impact stories to inspire safe choices that protect themselves and others from the consequences of driving impaired. In addition, MADD has been there to support players, staff, and their communities when their lives have been forever changed because of an impaired driving crash.

These educational and awareness programs help change behaviors that lead to deaths and injuries caused by impaired driving, still the leading killer on U.S. roads. Each year, more than 10,000 people die and 300,000 are injured due to drunk driving.

Consider this, every 52 minutes someone is killed by an impaired driver. That means during the course of Super Bowl LVI, four people's lives will have been cut short. MADD remains focused on one number: ZERO. Together with the NFL and the fans, MADD is creating a nation of zero deaths, zero injuries, and zero families impacted by impaired driving. We need your help; visit **madd.org** today to get involved.

Growing the Game

IN SUPPORT OF THE NFL'S VISION to grow the game of football and engage youth, high school, and college football participants, the "Play Football" initiative was launched in 2016.

This year-round program celebrates youth, high school, and college football by connecting the football community and promoting the values of the game. During the 2021 NFL season, Play Football priorities focused on utilizing the league calendar to lead efforts with youth, high school, and college stakeholders to grow and develop the game of football while ensuring alignment with all 32 clubs, current and former players (Legends), and other partners.

In collaboration with Las Vegas Raiders and Los Angeles Rams and Chargers communities, there were 12 collective Play Football events for the Pro Bowl and Super Bowl LVI that involved young fans, players, parents, and coaches. In total, over 5,000 stakeholders were engaged.

For the first time, the East-West Shrine Bowl was integrated into the Pro Bowl. Similar to recent years, the game was an opportunity for aspiring NFL assistant coaches to develop in elevated roles or different position groups. The East-West Shrine Bowl also provided development for other football roles, such as video, athletic training, and equipment.

In the league's continued efforts to strengthen relationships with football partners and organizations, the third annual Youth Stakeholder Meetings will resume during the 2022 Scouting Combine in Indianapolis. The overall objective of the meetings will be to learn best practices on growing the game from each respective organization and generate consensus on Return to Play (RTP) strategies for 2022 and beyond.

Learn more about the Play Football initiative by visiting **playfootball.com** and join the conversation on social media using **#PLAYFOOTBALL**.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE COACHES

DON SHULA
HIGH SCHOOL COACH OF THE YEAR

The Don Shula NFL High School Coach of the Year Award honors high school football coaches who demonstrate the integrity, achievement, and leadership exemplified by the winningest coach in NFL history, the late Don Shula.

There were 32 nominees for the 2021 award, with the winner announced at the Feb. 6 Pro Bowl in Las Vegas.

Nike, a presenting partner, and the NFL Foundation award $12,500 to the Don Shula Award winner, while the associated high school football program receives $17,500. The second finalist is awarded $7,500, while the associated high school football program receives $12,500. The other 30 finalists receive $1,000 each.

The 2020 winner, **Derrick Avery** of **Booker T. Washington High School** in Atlanta, was honored following a COVID-19-impacted season. Avery, nominated by the Atlanta Falcons, led the Bulldogs to a 7-3 record and postseason bid. Off the field, he partnered with the Falcons' player-led social justice committee in the Rise Up & Vote campaign, which focused on voter education and participation.

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Crucial Catch

THE NFL, ITS CLUBS, PLAYERS, and the American Cancer Society are committed to the fight against cancer. Crucial Catch addresses the early detection and risk reduction for multiple types of cancer and is committed to addressing the unequal burden of cancer in underserved, high-risk communities.

Since 2009, this partnership has raised more than $23 million in support of the American Cancer Society and its mission to save lives, celebrate lives, and lead the fight for a world without cancer. Money raised through the Crucial Catch initiative funds grants that help people in underserved communities receive potentially lifesaving screening resources.

With the NFL's support, the American Cancer Society's Community Health Advocates implementing Nationwide Grants for Empowerment and Equity (CHANGE) program has awarded grants to more than 100 health system partners to address cancer prevention, early detection, and timely access to follow-up care. The 13-year partnership has led to over one million people being impacted, particularly in high-risk communities.

Throughout October, NFL games featured multi-colored Crucial Catch branding on the field and in stadiums to represent multiple cancers – including breast, colorectal, lung, cervical, prostate, and childhood – all to provide education and raise awareness of how cancer has impacted the lives of people in our communities on many levels.

As part of the Crucial Catch initiative, the NFL and American Cancer Society continue to provide individuals nationwide with access to The Defender, a free digital assessment tool that helps consumers better understand and reduce their cancer risk. The tool provides users with personalized, quick, and informative recommendations on how they can take action and adapt their lifestyles to reduce their risk of cancer.

To learn more about these efforts, visit **nfl.com/crucialcatch**.

PLAYER CARE FOUNDATION

CARING FOR THOSE WHO CONTRIBUTED

The NFL Player Care Foundation (PCF) is an independent foundation created in 2007 through a partnership among NFL owners, the NFL Players Association, the Pro Football Hall of Fame, and the NFL Alumni Association.

PCF is dedicated to helping former NFL players improve their quality of life by addressing a broad spectrum of needs, including financial assistance, medical support, career placement, cardiovascular health, prostate health, and mental health.

PCF is proud to partner with one of the nation's premier medical providers, Tulane University School of Medicine, to conduct its Healthy Body & Mind Screening program. This complimentary national program is available to all NFL Legends and includes cardiovascular, prostate, and mental health screenings.

Each year, a screening is held in the Super Bowl host city, including this year in Los Angeles. Also during Super Bowl Week, PCF is hosting its 4th Annual Super Bowl Career Fair, an event where NFL Legends are able to meet and interview with recruiters from more than 35 national employers.

Since its inception, PCF has provided over $20.5 million to former players in need through financial grants, disaster relief, and mental health resources.

Additionally, PCF has screened more than 6,200 retired players and has identified numerous life-threatening medical issues that were addressed immediately. The Foundation provides these programs and services with diversity, equity, and inclusion as a guiding principle in its work.

To learn more about the NFL Player Care Foundation, visit **nflplayercare.com** or email **Dana.Lihan@NFL.com**.

Tulane University SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

NFL ALUMNI

Saluting Our Military

THE NFL'S SALUTE TO SERVICE IS THE LEAGUE'S year-round effort to Honor, Empower, and Connect with our nation's service members, veterans, and their families. The league works with its core military charitable partners, including the Pat Tillman Foundation, TAPS, USO, the Bob Woodruff Foundation, and Wounded Warrior Project, to fund programs and provide resources that positively impact veterans, active duty military, and their families.

Since 2011, more than $51 million has been raised through Salute to Service to support the league's military charitable partners.

Sam Lutz/AP Images

Honoring the Service and Sacrifice of Military Members and their Families

Throughout the year, the NFL, its clubs, and players honor and recognize service members, veterans, and their families at NFL events.

The NFL partners with TAPS to fund programs that support the families of fallen military service members. Thousands of survivors can access youth and mentor programs and services to support all those grieving the loss of a military loved one. Through the partnership, more than 5,500 survivors who are part of TAPS have been able to participate in NFL events and honor their fallen loved one(s).

Empowering the Military Community through Partnerships and Resources

By partnering with organizations that support service members, veterans, and their families, the NFL uses its platform and resources to create a positive impact for our nation's heroes.

- To help honor leaders who exemplify Pat Tillman's enduring legacy of service, the NFL partners with the Pat Tillman Foundation, providing more than $22 million in academic scholarships and lifelong leadership development for nearly 750 Tillman Scholars.
- The NFL partners with Wounded Warrior Project® (WWP) to provide more than 200,000 wounded veterans and family support members access to free programs and resources in mental health, career counseling, and long-term rehabilitative care.
- The NFL partners with the Bob Woodruff Foundation (BWF) to expand its support for the military community by leveraging BWF's expertise in finding, funding, and shaping best-in-class organizations that deliver measurable results, directly supporting post-9/11 veterans and their families. As part of this partnership, the NFL and BWF created a grant referral pipeline for veteran-serving nonprofits to apply for funding to assist those in need. To learn more information about applying for a grant, visit: **bobwoodrufffoundation.org/nfl-grants**.

Connecting through the Shared Love of Football

The NFL brings service members and their families together through their shared love of football and provides opportunities for those serving to connect with one another.

For more than 50 years, the NFL has supported the USO and its mission to strengthen service members by keeping them connected to family, home, and country. Since 2007, NFL players and coaches have traveled on USO tours to 26 countries to meet and thank more than 97,000 service members.

For more information on these programs, please visit **nfl.com/salute**.

Steve Cannon – 2020 STS Award Winner

NFL SALUTE TO SERVICE AWARD PRESENTED BY USAA

The Salute to Service Award presented by USAA annually recognizes NFL players, coaches, personnel, and Legends nominated by NFL clubs who demonstrate an exemplary commitment to honoring and supporting the military community.

Nominees are evaluated based on the positive effect of the individual's efforts on the military community, the type of service conducted, the thoroughness of the program, and the level of commitment.

Team nominations are submitted in October, and the award is presented during Super Bowl Week and recognized at the *NFL Honors* awards show.

First presented in 2011, recent recipients include former Falcons center Ben Garland (2018), former Chargers linebacker Donnie Edwards (2019), and CEO of AMB Sports and Entertainment, the parent company of the Atlanta Falcons, Steve Cannon (2020).

A total of $50,000 is donated in the recipient's name: $25,000 from USAA to the aid societies representing all military branches and $25,000 from the NFL to the award recipient's military charity of choice.

USAA, Official NFL Salute to Service Partner, honors and appreciates active duty military, veterans, and their families by creating unique opportunities that bring the military community and the NFL closer together. Examples include USAA's Salute to Service Games, where military guests are invited to watch their local NFL team play while enjoying VIP hospitality; and USAA's Unit Interactions, where NFL players visit local military installations to experience a day in the life of service members and share their appreciation of our nation's military.

To learn more about this year's Salute to Service Award nominees, visit **nfl.com/salute**.

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THE NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE'S BIGGEST SEASON EVER **delivered in an even bigger way for fans, with thrilling comebacks, record-breaking performances, and a playoff race that went down to the final seconds of the final game. Follow along as we recap the moments and milestones that defined the 2021 season.**

CARDS ACE EARLY TESTS

QB Murray, play-making defense set the pace for NFL's final unbeaten team

FOUR WEEKS INTO THE 2021 SEASON, the Arizona Cardinals looked to be the real deal. They knocked off a defending division champ as well as an NFC West rival, and had three road wins under their belt, providing a glimpse of what could be in store as they pursued the team's first playoff berth in six seasons.

A 37-20 victory over the Rams in Week 4 put an exclamation point on those early efforts. Kyler Murray threw for 268 yards and a pair of touchdowns, James Conner had two rushing TDs for the second time on the year, and the Cardinals' defense came up big in the fourth quarter by stopping the Rams on downs at the 1-yard line with the game still in doubt.

"I feel like as a team, we're building toward something," said cornerback Byron Murphy, who nabbed his third interception of the season in that win. "We hadn't beaten the Rams in how many years? I don't know the exact number. Five years? But this is something definitely growing."

Fives were wild in the Cardinals' Week 1 win at Tennessee. Murray was responsible for five touchdowns – four throwing and one rushing – and defensive end Chandler Jones added a career-high five sacks (along with two forced fumbles) in a 38-13 victory.

Through four games, Kyler Murray owned a league-best .761 completion percentage, helping the Cardinals to their best start since 2012.

NFL STANDINGS THROUGH WEEK 4

AFC EAST	W-L-T	PCT	PF	PA
Buffalo	3-1-0	.750	134	44
Miami	1-3-0	.250	62	105
New England	1-3-0	.250	71	70
N.Y. Jets	1-3-0	.250	47	94

AFC NORTH	W-L-T	PCT	PF	PA
Baltimore	3-1-0	.750	105	97
Cincinnati	3-1-0	.750	92	75
Cleveland	3-1-0	.750	100	67
Pittsburgh	1-3-0	.250	67	93

AFC SOUTH	W-L-T	PCT	PF	PA
Tennessee	2-2-0	.500	95	111
Houston	1-3-0	.250	67	116
Indianapolis	1-3-0	.250	83	97
Jacksonville	0-4-0	.000	74	115

AFC WEST	W-L-T	PCT	PF	PA
Denver	3-1-0	.750	83	49
L.A. Chargers	3-1-0	.750	95	74
Las Vegas	3-1-0	.750	104	100
Kansas City	2-2-0	.500	134	125

NFC EAST	W-L-T	PCT	PF	PA
Dallas	3-1-0	.750	126	97
Washington	2-2-0	.500	101	122
N.Y. Giants	1-3-0	.250	83	95
Philadelphia	1-3-0	.250	94	106

NFC NORTH	W-L-T	PCT	PF	PA
Green Bay	3-1-0	.750	95	100
Chicago	2-2-0	.500	64	91
Minnesota	1-3-0	.250	94	92
Detroit	0-4-0	.000	81	119

NFC SOUTH	W-L-T	PCT	PF	PA
Carolina	3-1-0	.750	97	66
Tampa Bay	3-1-0	.750	122	105
New Orleans	2-2-0	.500	94	69
Atlanta	1-3-0	.250	78	128

NFC WEST	W-L-T	PCT	PF	PA
Arizona	4-0-0	1.000	140	85
L.A. Rams	3-1-0	.750	115	99
San Francisco	2-2-0	.500	107	102
Seattle	2-2-0	.500	103	100

Kyusung Gong/AP Images

Stephen Brashear/AP Images

Cooper Kupp delivered in a big way for the Rams in their Week 2 win over the Colts, catching nine passes for 163 yards and two touchdowns.

Derrick Henry posted three 100-yard rushing games in the first four weeks, highlighted by a 182-yard, three-TD effort against Seattle.

It was a different challenge but the same outcome against the Vikings in Week 2. Matt Prater, who earlier kicked a 62-yard field goal, made a 27-yarder late in the fourth quarter to put his team ahead, 34-33, and the Cardinals then hung on in the final seconds.

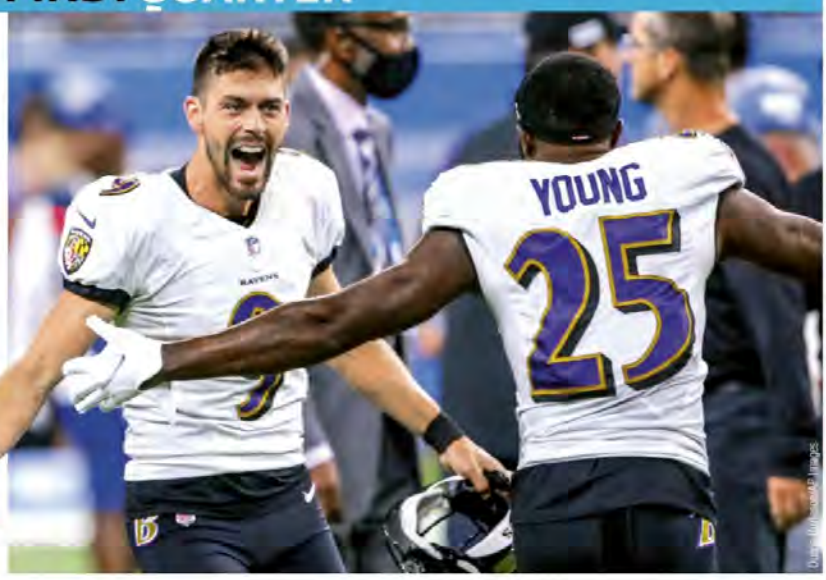
After falling behind to Jacksonville in Week 3, the Cardinals scored the game's final 21 points to rally for a 31-19 victory. Murphy grabbed two interceptions, including one that he returned 29 yards for the go-ahead touchdown on the final play of the third quarter.

Through four games, Murray owned a league-leading 76.1 completion percentage and ranked third in passing yards with 1,273, while the team's 4-0 start was its best since 2012.

"We have to continue to prove it," Murray said after the Rams game. "I'm not too worried about what other people think. The guys in the locker room understand what we're doing, what we're capable of, and where we can take it."

WEEK 1

Buccaneers fans who packed Raymond James Stadium for the team's season opener had reason to celebrate when the night started – and when it ended. Pregame ceremonies featured the raising of the Super Bowl LV championship banner and words from co-owner Bryan Glazer, who lauded the team for becoming the first to win the Super Bowl at its home stadium before adding, "There was one thing missing. All of you," referencing COVID restrictions in place in 2020. A thrilling game against the Cowboys followed, capped by a second half that saw a series of dramatic turns. After an 11-yard Tom Brady (32 of 50, 379 yards, 4 TDs) scoring strike to Rob Gronkowski gave the Bucs a 28-19 lead, Dallas countered with a 21-yard Dak Prescott-to-Amari Cooper touchdown and a 48-yard Greg Zuerlein field goal to move ahead by a point with 1:29 to play. That left just enough time for Brady to orchestrate an 11-play, 62-yard drive capped by Ryan



"I JUST HOPE EVERYBODY WHO CAUGHT PASSES FROM ME OVER THE YEARS HAD A LITTLE SMILE ON THEIR FACE TONIGHT KNOWING THAT THEY CONTRIBUTED TO A VERY COOL RECORD. – BUCS QB TOM BRADY, AFTER SETTING THE NFL MARK FOR CAREER PASSING YARDS

Succop's 36-yard field goal for the 31-29 victory. "There was no doubt that we're going to win the game with [Brady]," Buccaneers coach Bruce Arians said afterwards. "It's just who's going to make plays."

Extra Points: As part of his three-touchdown, 337-yard passing day in the Chiefs' 33-29 win over Cleveland, Patrick Mahomes set league marks for most TD passes (117) and most passing yards (14,489) in a player's first 50 career starts. … Russell Wilson threw for four touchdowns with no interceptions and posted a 152.3 passer rating, leading the Seahawks to a 28-16 triumph over the Colts. … Christian McCaffrey accounted for 187 scrimmage yards – 98 rushing and 89 receiving on nine catches – as part of the Panthers' 19-14 win over the Jets. … Kickoff Weekend concluded with a thriller in Las Vegas. Daniel Carlson kicked a game-tying 55-yard field goal in the closing seconds of regulation, and defensive end Carl Nassib had a strip-sack in overtime that set up Derek Carr's 31-yard touchdown pass to Zay Jones to lift the Raiders over the Ravens, 33-27.

WEEK 2

Derrick Henry powered a late comeback that carried the Titans to an improbable 33-30 overtime victory at Seattle. Henry totaled 182 rushing yards and scored three touchdowns, two of those coming in the fourth quarter to bring his team back from a 14-point deficit. He also carried the ball four times for 21 yards on the final drive of OT to position Randy Bullock for his game-winning 36-yard field goal.

Justin Tucker (9) celebrates with Ravens teammate Tavon Young (25) after kicking an NFL-record 66-yard field goal to defeat the Lions in Week 3.

Through four games, the Browns' Myles Garrett had an NFL-best six sacks, led by a 4.5-sack effort against Chicago.

"I don't think anyone expected us to come here and get a 'W,'" said Henry, who added five receptions. "I knew if we stuck together, trust in what we preach and what coach preaches, play the way we practice, it would eventually come together for us." It marked Tennessee's biggest regular-season comeback since 2006. With his team trailing by seven as the clock counted down, Titans QB Ryan Tannehill (27 of 40, 347 yards) completed his final seven passes of regulation to set up Henry's game-tying 1-yard TD run with 29 seconds remaining. The game marked Henry's 10th with at least 150 yards rushing.

Extra Points: Tampa Bay set an NFL record by winning nine consecutive games and scoring at least 30 points in each of them, adding a 48-25 win over Atlanta to that list. Defense contributed to the scoring outburst, with safety Mike Edwards putting the game away by returning two fourth-quarter interceptions for touchdowns. … In the Bills' 35-0 shutout of Miami, Tre'Davious White contributed a team-leading nine tackles, Levi Wallace grabbed an interception, and four different players collected sacks. … Ezekiel Elliott and Tony Pollard each rushed for touchdowns, and Greg Zuerlein kicked a 56-yard field goal as time expired to deliver the Cowboys a 20-17 win over the Chargers. … Matthew Stafford directed a pair of fourth-quarter scoring drives,

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Andy Reid made history with the Chiefs' Week 4 victory over the Eagles, becoming the first head coach to win 100 games with two different teams.

Matt Rourke/AP Images

the first ending with Cooper Kupp's 10-yard TD catch and the second with Matt Gay's go-ahead 38-yard field goal, to lead the Rams past the Colts, 27-24.

WEEK 3

The Raiders and the Panthers were among the teams to stay perfect on the season. Derek Carr threw for 386 yards and two touchdowns, and Daniel Carlson kicked a 22-yard field goal in overtime as Las Vegas overcame a 14-point deficit to edge Miami, 31-28. "We were down 14-0 to Baltimore as well (in Week 1), so that was the first thing we talked about (on the sideline)," said receiver Hunter Renfrow, whose 12-yard third-quarter TD catch gave the Raiders their first lead of the game. "I don't think anybody panicked, because we knew everything we did was self-inflicted." With the win, the Raiders improved to 3-0 for the first time in 19 years – with each of those victories coming against teams that won at least 10 games in 2020. Carolina was led by Sam Darnold's 304 passing yards and two rushing touchdowns in a 24-9 victory at Houston, earning its first 3-0 start since the Super Bowl season of 2015. "In the second half, we trusted Sam," said Panthers coach Matt Rhule. "We were throwing more verticals and pushing the ball down the field." That approach led to scoring drives covering 9, 10, and 12 plays, and broke open a game that Carolina led just 7-6 at the half.

Extra Points: Justin Tucker's 66-yard field goal as time expired was the longest in NFL history and lifted the Ravens to a 19-17 victory over Detroit. … The Jaguars' Jamal Agnew matched a league record for longest touchdown, bringing back a missed field 109 yards on the final play of the second quarter in a 31-19 loss to Arizona. … Josh Allen threw for 358 yards and four touchdowns and ran for another score to direct Buffalo's 43-21 win over Washington. … Justin Herbert and Mike Williams connected on a pair of fourth-quarter touchdown passes, the second of those a 4-yarder with less than a minute remaining, to carry the Chargers over the Chiefs, 30-24. … DeSean Jackson hauled in a 75-yard TD catch as part of the Rams' 34-24 victory over Tampa Bay. … Ja'Marr Chase caught scoring passes of 9 and 34 yards in Cincinnati's 24-10 win at Pittsburgh. … A.J. Johnson collected two sacks and Caden Sterns and Justin Simmons each had a interception to help undefeated Denver blank the Jets, 26-0.

The Panthers' Sam Darnold became the first QB in NFL history with five rushing touchdowns in his team's first four games of a season.

WEEK 4

In overseeing the Chiefs' 42-30 victory at Philadelphia, Andy Reid became the first coach in NFL history to record at least 100 wins with multiple teams. Fittingly, the milestone win came against the Eagles,

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Trevon Diggs had interceptions in each of the Cowboys' first four games, including two in the team's Week 4 victory over the Panthers.

Brandon Wade/AP Images

who he coached to 140 victories across 14 seasons (1999-2012) and led to Super Bowl XXXIX. "It's special to him," said Chiefs QB Patrick Mahomes, who threw for 278 yards and five touchdowns. "He kind of became Andy Reid in Philadelphia. But when you look back on [his career], you'll know him as a Kansas City Chief. The way he was able to build up this organization from Day One. ... No offense to Philly, but I'm glad they let him go and he's coaching us in Kansas City. He'll definitely take in this moment for a second, at least." Three of Mahomes' scoring tosses went to Tyreek Hill, including a 6-yarder early in the second quarter that put the Chiefs ahead, 14-10, a lead they would never relinquish. Hill finished with 186 receiving yards and Clyde Edwards-Helaire added 102 yards rushing.

Extra Points: The Bills defeated the Texans, 40-0, reaching the 35-point plateau for the third consecutive week and becoming the first team since the 2000 Ravens to record two shutouts in their first four games of a season. ... With the Seahawks' 28-21 win at San Francisco, Russell Wilson joined Peyton Manning as the only quarterbacks in NFL history with at least 100 wins in their first 10 seasons. ... Ezekiel Elliott rushed for 143 yards and cornerback Trevon Diggs grabbed his fourth and fifth interceptions of the season in Dallas' 36-28 win over the Panthers. ... Tom Brady returned to New England, where he spent the first 20 years of his career, and led the Buccaneers to a 19-17 victory. In throwing for 269 yards, he also broke Drew Brees' league record for career passing yards (80,358) and became the fourth QB in history to defeat all 32 NFL teams. ... Saquon Barkley's 6-yard TD run in OT capped the Giants' rally from an 11-point fourth-quarter deficit to edge the Saints, 27-21. ... The Jets also prevailed in OT, 27-24, over the Titans. Zach Wilson threw for 297 yards and two TDs.

SCORES & AWARDS

WEEK 1 / SEPTEMBER 9-13

TAMPA BAY 31, Dallas 29
HOUSTON 37, Jacksonville 21
L.A. Chargers 20, WASHINGTON 16
Seattle 28, INDIANAPOLIS 16
CAROLINA 19, N.Y. Jets 14
CINCINNATI 27, Minnesota 24 (OT)
Arizona 38, TENNESSEE 13
San Francisco 41, DETROIT 33
Pittsburgh 23, BUFFALO 16
PHILADELPHIA 32, Atlanta 6
KANSAS CITY 33, Cleveland 29
NEW ORLEANS 38, Green Bay 3+
Denver 27, N.Y. GIANTS 13
Miami 17, NEW ENGLAND 16
L.A. RAMS 34, Chicago 14
LAS VEGAS 33, Baltimore 27 (OT)
+Played in Jacksonville

PLAYERS OF THE WEEK
AFC Offense
Patrick Mahomes, QB, Kansas City
AFC Defense
Maxx Crosby, DE, Las Vegas
AFC Special Teams
Evan McPherson, K, Cincinnati
NFC Offense
Matthew Stafford, QB, L.A. Rams
NFC Defense
Chandler Jones, LB, Arizona
NFC Special Teams
Bradley Pinion, P, Tampa Bay
Pepsi Zero Sugar NFL Rookie
Ja'Marr Chase, Cincinnati

WEEK 2 / SEPTEMBER 16-20

WASHINGTON 30, N.Y. Giants 29
New England 25, N.Y. JETS 6
Denver 23, JACKSONVILLE 13
Buffalo 35, MIAMI 0
San Francisco 17, PHILADELPHIA 11
L.A. Rams 27, INDIANAPOLIS 24
Las Vegas 26, PITTSBURGH 17
CHICAGO 20, Cincinnati 17
CLEVELAND 31, Houston 21
CAROLINA 26, New Orleans 7
ARIZONA 34, Minnesota 33
TAMPA BAY 48, Atlanta 25
Tennessee 33, SEATTLE 30 (OT)
Dallas 20, L.A. CHARGERS 17
BALTIMORE 36, Kansas City 35
GREEN BAY 35, Detroit 17

PLAYERS OF THE WEEK
AFC Offense
Derrick Henry, RB, Tennessee
AFC Defense
Odafe Oweh, LB, Baltimore
AFC Special Teams
Daniel Carlson, K, Las Vegas
NFC Offense
Kyler Murray, QB, Arizona
NFC Defense
Mike Edwards, S, Tampa Bay
NFC Special Teams
Mitch Wishnowsky, P, San Francisco
Pepsi Zero Sugar NFL Rookie
Asante Samuel Jr., CB, L.A. Chargers

WEEK 3 / SEPTEMBER 23-27

Carolina 24, HOUSTON 9
TENNESSEE 25, Indianapolis 16
Atlanta 17, N.Y. GIANTS 14
L.A. Chargers 30, KANSAS CITY 24
Cincinnati 24, PITTSBURGH 10
CLEVELAND 26, Chicago 6
Baltimore 19, DETROIT 17
New Orleans 28, NEW ENGLAND 13
Arizona 31, JACKSONVILLE 19
BUFFALO 43, Washington 21
DENVER 26, N.Y. Jets 0
LAS VEGAS 31, Miami 28 (OT)
MINNESOTA 30, Seattle 17
L.A. RAMS 34, Tampa Bay 24
Green Bay 30, SAN FRANCISCO 28
Dallas 41, PHILADELPHIA 21

PLAYERS OF THE WEEK
AFC Offense
Josh Allen, QB, Buffalo
AFC Defense
Myles Garrett, DE, Cleveland
AFC Special Teams
Justin Tucker, K, Baltimore
NFC Offense
Matthew Stafford, QB, L.A. Rams
NFC Defense
Byron Murphy, CB, Arizona
NFC Special Teams
Mason Crosby, K, Green Bay
Pepsi Zero Sugar NFL Rookie
Asante Samuel Jr., CB, L.A. Chargers

WEEK 4 / SEPTEMBER 30 - OCTOBER 4

CINCINNATI 24, Jacksonville 21
N.Y. JETS 27, Tennessee 24 (OT)
Kansas City 42, PHILADELPHIA 30
DALLAS 36, Carolina 28
N.Y. Giants 27, NEW ORLEANS 21 (OT)
Cleveland 14, MINNESOTA 7
CHICAGO 24, Detroit 14
BUFFALO 40, Houston 0
Indianapolis 27, MIAMI 17
Washington 34, ATLANTA 30
Seattle 28, SAN FRANCISCO 21
Arizona 37, L.A. RAMS 20
GREEN BAY 27, Pittsburgh 17
Baltimore 23, DENVER 7
Tampa Bay 19, NEW ENGLAND 17
L.A. CHARGERS 28, Las Vegas 14

PLAYERS OF THE WEEK
AFC Offense
Joe Burrow, QB, Cincinnati
AFC Defense
Tremaine Edmunds, LB, Buffalo
AFC Special Teams
Rigoberto Sanchez, P, Indianapolis
NFC Offense
Daniel Jones, QB, N.Y. Giants
NFC Defense
Trevon Diggs, CB, Dallas
NFC Special Teams
DeAndre Carter, KR, Washington
Pepsi Zero Sugar NFL Rookie
Zach Wilson, QB, N.Y. Jets

TITANS STAND TALL AT MIDSEASON

Impressive run puts team atop AFC South

THE TITANS STARED DOWN A DAUNTING stretch to wrap up the season's first half, defeating four 2020 playoff teams in succession as part of a five-game winning streak to grab hold of the AFC South lead and improve to a conference-best 7-2.

It started in primetime in Week 6 with a 34-31 win over the Bills on *Monday Night Football*. Derrick Henry posted his fifth consecutive 100-yard rushing game, finishing the night with 143 yards and three touchdowns, including the go-ahead score with 3:05 to play. Tennessee's defense then made a goal line stand in the closing seconds.

Just six days later, the Titans scored on their first five possessions on the way to manhandling the defending AFC champion Chiefs, 27-3.

"We wanted to get going early and score points early," said QB Ryan Tannehill, whose stat line included 270 passing yards and a TD as well as a rushing touchdown. "So we were able to do that, and hopefully we can keep it going."

They did, prevailing, 34-31, in overtime in a divisional showdown against the Colts in Week 8. Tannehill threw three touchdown passes, Elijah Molden scored on a 2-yard interception return, and Kevin Byard

A.J. Brown caught 10 passes, including a 57-yard TD, in the Titans' 34-31 Week 8 win over the Colts, part of the team's impressive 7-2 start.

Zach Bolinger/AP Images

NFL STANDINGS THROUGH WEEK 9

AFC EAST	W-L-T	PCT	PF	PA
Buffalo	5-3-0	.625	235	119
New England	5-4-0	.556	230	170
N.Y. Jets	2-6-0	.250	144	251
Miami	2-7-0	.222	155	242

AFC NORTH	W-L-T	PCT	PF	PA
Baltimore	6-2-0	.750	221	195
Pittsburgh	5-3-0	.625	161	169
Cincinnati	5-4-0	.556	236	203
Cleveland	5-4-0	.556	224	196

AFC SOUTH	W-L-T	PCT	PF	PA
Tennessee	7-2-0	.778	255	211
Indianapolis	4-5-0	.444	245	213
Jacksonville	2-6-0	.250	132	209
Houston	1-8-0	.111	128	258

AFC WEST	W-L-T	PCT	PF	PA
Las Vegas	5-3-0	.625	196	189
L.A. Chargers	5-3-0	.625	199	201
Denver	5-4-0	.556	221	227
Kansas City	5-4-0	.556	187	153

NFC EAST	W-L-T	PCT	PF	PA
Dallas	6-2-0	.750	241	192
N.Y. Giants	3-6-0	.333	179	216
Philadelphia	3-6-0	.333	227	218
Washington	2-6-0	.250	156	227

NFC NORTH	W-L-T	PCT	PF	PA
Green Bay	7-2-0	.778	199	180
Minnesota	3-5-0	.375	194	191
Chicago	3-6-0	.333	150	224
Detroit	0-8-0	.000	134	244

NFC SOUTH	W-L-T	PCT	PF	PA
Tampa Bay	6-2-0	.750	260	183
New Orleans	5-3-0	.625	201	155
Atlanta	4-4-0	.500	175	220
Carolina	4-5-0	.444	171	183

NFC WEST	W-L-T	PCT	PF	PA
Arizona	8-1-0	.889	277	155
L.A. Rams	7-2-0	.778	261	196
San Francisco	3-5-0	.375	185	202
Seattle	3-5-0	.375	181	169

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Aaron Jones' work on the ground was among the reasons the Packers stood atop the NFC North at midseason.

Justin Herbert enjoyed a stellar afternoon vs. the Eagles in Week 9, throwing for 356 yards and two touchdowns and running for another score.

Josh Allen (41) and the Jaguars got the better of Josh Allen (17) and the Bills in Week 9. The Jags' Allen had an interception, a sack, and a fumble recovery in the 9-6 win.

picked off a pass in the extra period to set up Randy Bullock's game-winning 44-yard field goal.

Byard was back at it in Week 9, grabbing his fifth interception of the season and returning it 24 yards for a TD to spark a 28-16 win over the Rams. Jeffery Simmons recorded three sacks, leading a Titans defense that didn't allow L.A. into the end zone until the game's final seconds.

"We continue to improve, and that's the message," Titans coach Mike Vrabel said. "We're better now than we were to start the season. That's the most important thing in the NFL, to find ways to continue to improve. Along the way, you have to find ways to win. If you don't get better, you'll find yourself on the outside looking in."

WEEK 5

Lamar Jackson engineered a stunning comeback and set a few records along the way, leading the Ravens from 19 points down to upend the Colts, 31-25, in overtime. The fourth-year quarterback completed 37 of 43 passes (86.0 percent) for 442 yards and four touchdowns, becoming the first player in NFL history to complete 80-or-more percent of his passes with at least 400 passing yards in the same game. "It's one of the greatest performances I've ever seen," said Ravens coach John Harbaugh. "It wasn't easy. It wasn't like we came out, just up and down the field. We had to overcome and fight through some things." Jackson threw a pair of fourth-quarter TD passes to Mark Andrews, sandwiched around Calais Campbell's block of a field-goal attempt with 4:29 remaining to keep it a one-score game. After hitting Andrews for a touchdown and game-tying two-point conversion, Jackson marched the Ravens 68 yards on 10 plays on the first drive of overtime, capped by his 5-yard TD throw to Marquise Brown. "I was just locked in," Jackson said. "I was calm. Everything was just moving slow."

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Duane Burleson/AP Images

Daniel Kucin Jr./AP Images

Extra Points: A crowd of 60,589 filled Tottenham Hotspur Stadium for the NFL's return to London, where Kyle Pitts caught nine passes for 119 yards and a TD to carry the Falcons past the Jets, 27-20. … DeAndre Hopkins caught six passes, among them a 9-yard TD, as the Cardinals improved to 5-0 for the first time in 47 years with a 17-10 win over the 49ers. … The Chargers and the Browns combined for 41 fourth-quarter points, the last of those coming on Austin Ekeler's 3-yard touchdown run with 1:31 to play that delivered Los Angeles a 47-42 victory. … Marquez Callaway caught two TD passes, including a go-ahead 49-yarder on the final play of the first half, and Marshon Lattimore recorded six passes defensed in the Saints' 33-22 victory over Washington. … Aaron Rodgers' two TD passes in the Packers' 25-22 overtime win over the Bengals pushed his career total to 422 and moved him into fifth place on the NFL's all-time list.

WEEK 6

A wild affair in Foxborough went to the Cowboys, who walked off with a 35-29 overtime win against the Patriots on Dak Prescott's 35-yard touchdown pass to CeeDee Lamb. Dallas found itself trailing, 21-20, late in the fourth quarter but moved ahead when Trevon Diggs grabbed his seventh interception of the year and brought it back 42 yards for a TD. That lead, however, lasted all of one play as Patriots quarterback Mac Jones fired a 75-yard touchdown strike to Kendrick Bourne. After a 2-point conversion, New England was ahead, 28-25, with 2:11 to play. Unfazed, Prescott (35 of 51, 445 yards, 3 TDs) converted a fourth-down pass and then hit Lamb for a 24-yard gain that set up Greg Zuerlein's 49-yard field goal to push the game into overtime. "I can't say enough about Dak, just the way that ball was being distributed and the calmness and the confidence he had in the pocket," said Cowboys coach Mike McCarthy. "We need these kinds of wins during the course of the season. I think this one could definitely pay forward for us."

- Through nine games, the Bengals' Ja'Marr Chase had seven TDs among his 44 receptions and was averaging better than 18 yards per catch.
- Lamar Jackson rallied the Ravens from 19 points down to defeat the Colts in Week 5 and from a 14-point deficit to top the Vikings in Week 8.

Extra Points: Kirk Cousins threw for 373 yards and three touchdowns, the last of those a 27-yarder to K.J. Osborn on the first possession of overtime, to give the Vikings a 34-28 win over Carolina. … Jacksonville overcame a 10-point deficit to defeat Miami, 23-20, at London's Tottenham Hotspur Stadium. Jaguars QB Trevor Lawrence threw for 319 yards and one TD, and Matthew Wright kicked field goals of 54 and 53 yards, the second of those the game-winner as time expired. … Cooper Kupp caught nine passes for 130 yards and two touchdowns in the Rams' 38-11 victory over the Giants.

WEEK 7

The tandem of Joe Burrow and Ja'Marr Chase launched the Bengals to a big intra-divisional win, 41-17 over the Ravens that put the teams

"IT WAS JUST AS GOOD AS THE DREAM." – COWBOYS QB COOPER RUSH, WHO CAPPED HIS FIRST NFL START WITH A LAST-MINUTE TOUCHDOWN PASS TO DEFEAT THE VIKINGS, 20-16

Ron D. Frazier/AP Images

Tim S. Warren/AP Images

Justin Berl/AP Images

- Arizona continued to soar under coach Kliff Kingsbury, owning a league-best 8-1 record.
- The NFL and the American Cancer Society teamed up for the 13th consecutive season to fight cancer with the "Crucial Catch" campaign.
- It took the Steelers' T.J. Watt just nine games to reach double figures in sacks for the fourth straight season. He had three sacks in Week 9 vs. Chicago.

in a tie atop the AFC North. Burrow threw for 416 yards and three TDs, one of those an 82-yard connection with Chase in the third quarter. "We've got so many weapons, (and) the defense is playing great ball right now," said Chase, whose 754 receiving yards were the most by a player through seven games since the AFC-NFC merger. "I think the sky is the limit for us." Baltimore owned a 17-13 third-quarter lead before Burrow hit tight end C.J. Uzomah for a 32-yard touchdown. One possession later, Burrow found Chase for their long TD. Cincinnati then tacked on fourth-quarter scoring runs from Joe Mixon and Samaje Perine. "We have a long way to go, but I'm really proud of the collective team effort," said Bengals coach Zac Taylor. "This was a complete game by all three phases, and that's what we need to come on the road to Baltimore with and beat them."

Extra Points: Tom Brady threw four TD passes, including the 600th of his career, to guide Tampa Bay's 38-3 win over Chicago. … Mac Jones passed for 307 yards and two touchdowns in the Patriots' 54-13 win over the Jets. … Kyle Pitts caught seven passes for 163 yards and Younghoe Koo kicked a 36-yard field goal on the game's final play as the Falcons edged the Dolphins, 30-28. … Derek Carr completed 31 of 34 passes – his 91.2 completion percentage the second-highest single-game mark for any QB with at least 30 attempts – with two touchdowns in the Raiders' 33-22 victory over the Eagles. … Matt Stafford threw for 334 yards and three TDs, and Jalen Ramsey made a key end zone interception in the fourth quarter, as part of the Rams' 28-19 win over the Lions. … Carson Wentz threw touchdown passes to Mo Alie-Cox and Michael Pittman Jr. and ran for another score to direct the Colts' 30-18 win over the 49ers.

Through the first half of the season, more than 25 percent of NFL games featured a game-winning score in the final two minutes of regulation or in overtime.

WEEK 8

Randall Cobb had a pair of touchdown receptions and Rasul Douglas grabbed a game-saving interception, allowing the Packers to edge the Cardinals, 24-21, in a key NFC clash. With the victory, Green Bay extended its winning streak to seven games, while Arizona lost for the first time on the season. Cobb's second touchdown, a 6-yarder to open the fourth quarter, put the Packers ahead, 24-14. But the host Cardinals answered with a touchdown of their own, and after making a goal-line stand, drove 94 yards before Douglas picked off a pass in the end zone with 12 seconds remaining. It was sweet moment for Douglas, who had spent time on the Cardinals' practice squad earlier in the year before being signed by Green Bay. "This is why I love this team," said Packers QB Aaron Rodgers. "The guy that made the pick was with [the Cardinals] for four weeks. We brought him in. He's starting for us. He's really meshed well with our team. To come up with a play like that is incredible."

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SCORES & AWARDS

WEEK 5 / OCTOBER 7-11

L.A. Rams 26, SEATTLE 17
ATLANTA 27, N.Y. Jets 20+
MINNESOTA 19, Detroit 17
New Orleans 33, WASHINGTON 22
New England 25, HOUSTON 22
TAMPA BAY 45, Miami 17
Green Bay 25, CINCINNATI 22 (OT)
PITTSBURGH 27, Denver 19
Philadelphia 21, CAROLINA 18
Tennessee 37, JACKSONVILLE 19
L.A. CHARGERS 47, Cleveland 42
Chicago 20, LAS VEGAS 9
ARIZONA 17, San Francisco 10
DALLAS 44, N.Y. Giants 20
Buffalo 38, KANSAS CITY 20
BALTIMORE 31, Indianapolis 25
+Played in London

PLAYERS OF THE WEEK
AFC Offense
Lamar Jackson, QB, Baltimore
AFC Defense
Greg Rousseau, DE, Buffalo
AFC Special Teams
Nick Folk, K, New England
NFC Offense
Tom Brady, QB, Tampa Bay
NFC Defense
Marshon Lattimore, CB, New Orleans
NFC Special Teams
T.J. Edwards, Philadelphia
Pepsi Zero Sugar NFL Rookie
Ja'Marr Chase, WR, Cincinnati

WEEK 6 / OCTOBER 14-18

Tampa Bay 28, PHILADELPHIA 22
JACKSONVILLE 23, Miami 20+
Kansas City 31, WASHINGTON 13
L.A. Rams 38, N.Y. GIANTS 11
INDIANAPOLIS 31, Houston 3
Cincinnati 34, DETROIT 11
Green Bay 24, CHICAGO 14
BALTIMORE 34, L.A. Chargers 6
Minnesota 34, CAROLINA 28 (OT)
Arizona 37, CLEVELAND 14
Las Vegas 34, DENVER 24
Dallas 35, NEW ENGLAND 29 (OT)
PITTSBURGH 23, Seattle 20 (OT)
TENNESSEE 34, Buffalo 31
+Played in London
Byes: Atlanta, New Orleans, N.Y. Jets, San Francisco

PLAYERS OF THE WEEK
AFC Offense
Derrick Henry, RB, Tennessee
AFC Defense
T.J. Watt, LB, Pittsburgh
AFC Special Teams
Matthew Wright, K, Jacksonville
NFC Offense
Dak Prescott, QB, Dallas
NFC Defense
Taylor Rapp, S, L.A. Rams
NFC Special Teams
Matt Prater, K, Arizona
Pepsi Zero Sugar NFL Rookie
Ja'Marr Chase, WR, Cincinnati

WEEK 7 / OCTOBER 21-25

CLEVELAND 17, Denver 14
N.Y. GIANTS 25, Carolina 3
NEW ENGLAND 54, N.Y. Jets 13
TENNESSEE 27, Kansas City 3
GREEN BAY 24, Washington 10
Atlanta 30, MIAMI 28
Cincinnati 41, BALTIMORE 17
L.A. RAMS 28, Detroit 19
LAS VEGAS 33, Philadelphia 22
ARIZONA 31, Houston 5
TAMPA BAY 38, Chicago 3
Indianapolis 30, SAN FRANCISCO 18
New Orleans 13, SEATTLE 10
Byes: Buffalo, Dallas, Jacksonville, L.A. Chargers, Minnesota, Pittsburgh

PLAYERS OF THE WEEK
AFC Offense
Ja'Marr Chase, WR, Cincinnati
AFC Defense
Yannick Ngakoue, DE, Las Vegas
AFC Special Teams
Rigoberto Sanchez, K, Indianapolis
NFC Offense
Alvin Kamara, RB, New Orleans
NFC Defense
Deion Jones, LB, Atlanta
NFC Special Teams
Graham Gano, K, N.Y. Giants
Pepsi Zero Sugar NFL Rookie
Ja'Marr Chase, WR, Cincinnati

WEEK 8 / OCTOBER 28-NOVEMBER 1

Green Bay 24, ARIZONA 21
N.Y. JETS 34, Cincinnati 31
Tennessee 34, INDIANAPOLIS 31 (OT)
L.A. Rams 38, HOUSTON 22
Pittsburgh 15, CLEVELAND 10
Philadelphia 44, DETROIT 6
San Francisco 33, CHICAGO 22
Carolina 19, ATLANTA 13
BUFFALO 26, Miami 11
New England 27, L.A. CHARGERS 24
SEATTLE 31, Jacksonville 7
DENVER 17, Washington 10
NEW ORLEANS 36, Tampa Bay 27
Dallas 20, MINNESOTA 16
KANSAS CITY 20, N.Y. Giants 17
Byes: Baltimore, Las Vegas

PLAYERS OF THE WEEK
AFC Offense
Mike White, QB, N.Y. Jets
AFC Defense
Adrian Phillips, DB, New England
AFC Special Teams
Randy Bullock, K, Tennessee
NFC Offense
Deebo Samuel, WR, San Francisco
NFC Defense
Micah Parsons, LB, Dallas
NFC Special Teams
Zane Gonzalez, K, Carolina
Pepsi Zero Sugar NFL Rookie
Micah Parsons, LB, Dallas

Extra Points: In the Jets' 34-31 win over Cincinnati, Mike White set an NFL record for completions by a player in his first career start (37) and joined Cam Newton as the only players since 1950 to throw for more than 400 yards in their first start. White finished with 405 yards and three touchdowns. … Elijah Mitchell rushed for 137 yards and a TD in the 49ers' 33-22 win at Chicago. … DK Metcalf caught a pair of touchdown passes for the Seahawks as they stormed past Jacksonville, 31-7. … P.J. Williams' 40-yard interception-return touchdown clinched the Saints' 36-27 victory over the Buccaneers. … Jordan Howard and Boston Scott each rushed for two touchdowns in the Eagles' 44-6 win at Detroit.

WEEK 9

In a *Monday Night Football* thriller, the Steelers edged out the Bears, 29-27, for their fourth straight win. Pittsburgh owned a late 10-point lead before the Bears pulled closer when DeAndre Houston-Carson returned a fumbled punt 25 yards for a TD with 6:31 remaining. A Chris Boswell field goal extended the lead back to six, but Justin Fields' TD pass to Darnell Mooney and Carlos Santos' PAT put Chicago ahead by a point with 1:46 to go. From there, Steelers QB Ben Roethlisberger led a seven-play drive capped by Boswell's game-winning 40-yard field goal. "We're finding ways to win the game," said Roethlisberger, who earlier threw a pair of touchdown passes to Pat Freiermuth. "Offensively speaking, we're doing just enough right now." The victory was the 150th of coach Mike Tomlin's career, moving him past Bill Cowher and into second place on the Steelers' all-time list.

Extra Points: Lamar Jackson threw for 266 yards and three TDs and rushed for another 120 yards in the Ravens' 34-31 overtime victory over Minnesota. … Justin Herbert completed 32 of 38 passes (84.2 percent) for 356 yards and two touchdowns, 12 of those completions going to Keenan Allen, in a 27-24 win over the Eagles. … Cleveland scored three long touchdowns – on Denzel Ward's 99-yard interception return, Nick Chubb's 70-yard run, and Donovan Peoples-Jones' 60-yard catch – in a 41-16 victory over the Bengals. … James Conner rushed for two first-half touchdowns and added a 45-yard scoring catch in the third quarter to spark the Cardinals' 31-17 win over the 49ers. … Jacksonville kept the Bills, who owned the league's top-scoring offense (32.7 ppg), out of the end zone on its way to a 9-6 victory.

WEEK 9 / NOVEMBER 4-8

INDIANAPOLIS 45, N.Y. Jets 30
Atlanta 27, NEW ORLEANS 25
Denver 30, DALLAS 16
New England 24, CAROLINA 6
BALTIMORE 34, Minnesota 31
Cleveland 41, CINCINNATI 16
JACKSONVILLE 9, Buffalo 6
MIAMI 17, Houston 9
N.Y. GIANTS 23, Las Vegas 16
L.A. Chargers 27, PHILADELPHIA 24
KANSAS CITY 13, Green Bay 7
Arizona 31, SAN FRANCISCO 17
Tennessee 28, L.A. RAMS 16
PITTSBURGH 29, Chicago 27
Byes: Detroit, Seattle, Tampa Bay, Washington

PLAYERS OF THE WEEK
AFC Offense
Justin Herbert, QB, L.A. Chargers
AFC Defense
Josh Allen, DE/LB, Jacksonville
AFC Special Teams
Tommy Townsend, P, Kansas City
NFC Offense
Matt Ryan, QB, Atlanta
NFC Defense
Xavier McKinney, S, N.Y. Giants
NFC Special Teams
Kene Nwangwu, RB, Minnesota
Pepsi Zero Sugar NFL Rookie
Javonte Williams, RB, Denver

PATRIOTS MAKE THEIR MOVE

Seven-game winning streak gives New England AFC's best record

RIDING A STIFLING DEFENSE, a powerful running game, and the accurate arm of rookie quarterback Mac Jones, the Patriots headed into their bye week owning a 9-4 record and staking a claim for the top seed in the AFC.

They literally ground out a 14-10 win over Buffalo to earn their seventh straight victory, running the ball 46 times and putting it in the air on just three occasions to combat 40-mph wind gusts that swept through Highmark Stadium.

"Just a crazy game to be a part of," said Jones, who became the third QB in league history to win at least nine games in his rookie season. "We knew it was going to be windy. You can't control it. You just have to go out there and do your job, and for us to run the ball like we did was incredible."

The game's biggest run came from Damien Harris, who scored the Patriots' lone touchdown on a 64-yard burst midway through the first quarter. Nick Folk added field goals from 34 and 41 yards, and the defense allowed just 230 total yards and twice turned away the Bills in the red zone in the game's final minutes.

That win was the latest in a Patriots surge that included victories over three AFC playoff teams from 2020. Another of those came in Week 10,

Mac Jones was on the mark in his first season with the Patriots, completing 70.3 percent of his passes with 16 TDs through 13 games.

Stew Milne/AP Images

NFL STANDINGS THROUGH WEEK 13

AFC EAST	W-L-T	PCT	PF	PA
New England	9-4-0	.692	350	200
Buffalo	7-5-0	.583	336	196
Miami	6-7-0	.462	254	288
N.Y. Jets	3-9-0	.250	217	367

AFC NORTH	W-L-T	PCT	PF	PA
Baltimore	8-4-0	.667	282	260
Cincinnati	7-5-0	.583	331	267
Pittsburgh	6-5-1	.542	244	286
Cleveland	6-6-0	.500	254	267

AFC SOUTH	W-L-T	PCT	PF	PA
Tennessee	8-4-0	.667	304	290
Indianapolis	7-6-0	.538	371	283
Houston	2-10-0	.167	164	323
Jacksonville	2-10-0	.167	180	320

AFC WEST	W-L-T	PCT	PF	PA
Kansas City	8-4-0	.667	303	259
L.A. Chargers	7-5-0	.583	314	315
Denver	6-6-0	.500	237	218
Las Vegas	6-6-0	.500	274	312

NFC EAST	W-L-T	PCT	PF	PA
Dallas	8-4-0	.667	353	267
Washington	6-6-0	.500	246	297
Philadelphia	6-7-0	.462	337	291
N.Y. Giants	4-8-0	.333	211	273

NFC NORTH	W-L-T	PCT	PF	PA
Green Bay	9-3-0	.750	283	242
Minnesota	5-7-0	.417	308	305
Chicago	4-8-0	.333	201	287
Detroit	1-10-1	.125	203	316

NFC SOUTH	W-L-T	PCT	PF	PA
Tampa Bay	9-3-0	.750	377	270
Carolina	5-7-0	.417	236	253
Atlanta	5-7-0	.417	216	332
New Orleans	5-7-0	.417	274	276

NFC WEST	W-L-T	PCT	PF	PA
Arizona	10-2-0	.833	343	224
L.A. Rams	8-4-0	.667	336	270
San Francisco	6-6-0	.500	303	278
Seattle	4-8-0	.333	239	249

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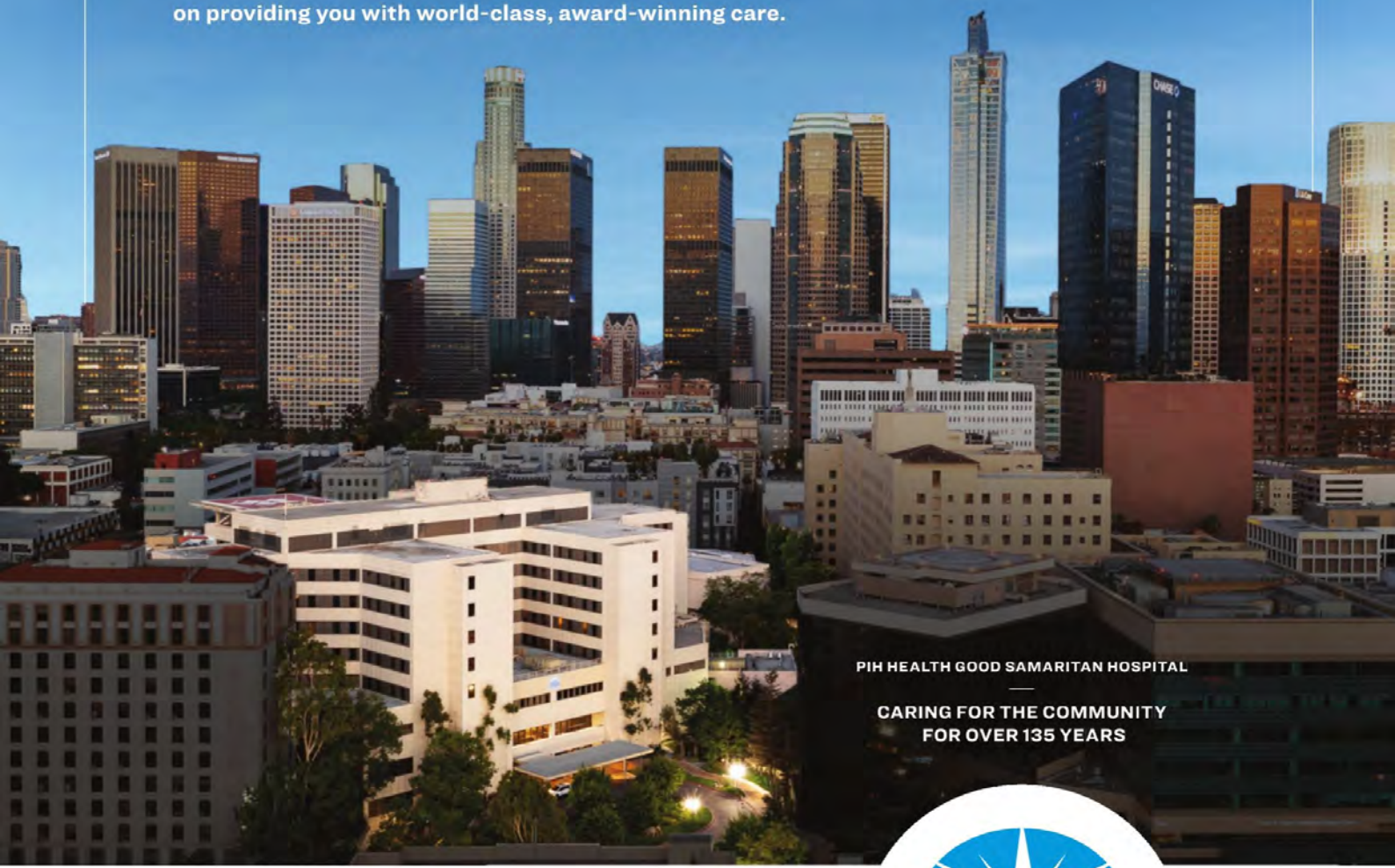

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Jonathan Taylor's seventh 100-yard rushing game of the season came in a 143-yard, two-TD effort in the Colts' 31-0 win at Houston.

Taylor Heinicke's steady play at QB was key to Washington's surge in the standings. He threw three TD passes in a Week 11 victory at Carolina.

Rusty Jones/AP Images

when Jones (19 of 23, 198 yards, 3 TDs) and Rhamondre Stevenson (100 yards rushing, 2 TDs) starred in a 45-7 decision over Cleveland.

One week later, the Patriots made their first trip to Atlanta since their dominating defensive effort in Super Bowl LIII against the Rams. They turned in another gem on that side of the ball, this time in a 25-0 blanking of the Falcons. Kyle Van Noy contributed two sacks and accounted for the game's final touchdown with a 35-yard interception return.

In Week 12, the Pats knocked off the Titans, 36-13, thanks to a defense that forced four turnovers, including cornerback J.C. Jackson's seventh interception of the season.

"We're catching our stride," said linebacker Matthew Judon, whose 12.5 sacks led the team and ranked third in the league "We're playing with a lot of confidence."

WEEK 10

Carolina's defense came up with big plays that led to three early scores, and Cam Newton accounted for two touchdowns in his first game back with the team, fueling a 34-10 win over Arizona. Newton's performance marked his 43rd game with both a passing and rushing TD, the most by a quarterback in NFL history. Shortly after linebacker Haason Reddick's sack forced a fumble to end the Cardinals' first possession, Newton sprinted 2 yards for a score that put Carolina ahead, 7-0. The Panthers then stopped the Cardinals on downs, and Newton quickly followed with a 2-yard TD pass to Robbie Anderson. A Donte Jackson interception then led to Zane Gonzalez's 44-yard field goal and a Carolina 17-0 lead. The Panthers would stop Arizona on downs twice more in the second half and limited the hosts to 169 total yards on the day. "Today was a good example of the team we can be," said Panthers running back Christian McCaffrey, who had 10 receptions and accounted for 161 scrimmage yards. "We know we can be special. It's just a matter of going out there and executing every week."

Extra Points: Patrick Mahomes threw for 406 yards and five TDs, two of those to Tyreek Hill, as the Chiefs pulled away for a 41-14 victory over the Raiders. … Darius Slay's 83-yard fumble-return TD and DeVonta Smith's two touchdown catches keyed the Eagles' 30-13 win at Denver. … The Dolphins scored 16 fourth-quarter points, highlighted by Xavien Howard's 49-yard fumble-recovery touchdown, to top the Ravens, 22-10. … Levi Wallace, Taron Johnson, Tre'Davious White,

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- 49ers receiver Deebo Samuel was proving to be a big threat in the running game, with four rushing TDs in the team's three wins in Weeks 10-12.
- Leonard Fournette erupted for four touchdowns – three rushing and one receiving – in the Bucs' Week 12 win over the Colts.
- Coach Matt LaFleur's Packers found themselves in a familiar position: atop the NFC North.

Jim Mone/AP Images

and Jordan Poyer each had an interception in the Bills' 45-17 win over the Jets. … Dak Prescott totaled 296 passing yards and two TDs, and Trevon Diggs grabbed his eighth interception of the season, in the Cowboys' 43-3 victory over Atlanta. … The Titans defeated New Orleans, 23-21, for their sixth consecutive victory and fifth in a row over a 2020 playoff team.

WEEK 11

Exciting endings took place in Minnesota, where the Vikings edged division rival Green Bay, 34-31, and Los Angeles, where the Chargers overcame the Steelers, 41-37. The Vikings' Kirk Cousins threw for 341 yards and three TDs, one of those a 9-yarder to Justin Jefferson that gave his team a 22-10 third-quarter lead. But Aaron Rodgers directed touchdown drives on all three Packers possessions in the second half, capped by his 75-yard strike to Marquez Valdes-Scantling that tied the game with 2:08 to play. That left just enough time for Cousins, who drove the Vikings into position for Greg Joseph's 29-yard field goal as time expired, marking the sixth time in Minnesota's 10 games that the outcome was decided on the final snap. "It's just life in the NFL. It's exciting. I certainly understand why people want to follow and watch it," Cousins said. In L.A., Justin Herbert's 53-yard touchdown pass to Mike Williams with 2:17 remaining allowed the Chargers to survive Pittsburgh's 27-point fourth-quarter. Chris Boswell kicked a 45-yard field goal that put the Steelers in front, but Herbert answered three plays later to give the Chargers their fifth fourth-quarter comeback win of the season. "It got a little too close for sure," Herbert said. "The defense did a great job coming up with stops, and then we put points up on what was a huge day for us."

The 49ers executed the NFL's longest drive since 1997 (13 min., 5 sec.) in the first quarter of their Week 11 game at Jacksonville. It led to a field goal in an eventual 30-10 win.

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"IT KIND OF GAVE ME GOOSE BUMPS, I'M NOT GOING TO LIE. WHEN THAT KICK WENT THROUGH, I HAD A LOT OF MEMORIES AS A KID.

– RAIDERS QB DEREK CARR, AFTER TEAMMATE DANIEL CARLSON KICKED AN OVERTIME FIELD GOAL TO DEFEAT THE COWBOYS ON THANKSGIVING DAY

Extra Points: Jonathan Taylor became the first player in NFL history to record at least 175 rushing yards, four rushing touchdowns, and one touchdown reception in a single game, sparking the Colts' 41-15 victory at Buffalo. … Colt McCoy completed 35 of 44 passes for 328 yards and two TDs, both to Zach Ertz, in the Cardinals' 23-13 win at Seattle. … Taylor Heinicke threw touchdown passes to Terry McLaurin, DeAndre Carter, and Cam Sims to lift Washington over Carolina, 27-21. … Desmond King intercepted two passes to help the Texans defeat Tennessee, 22-13, and snap the Titans' six-game winning streak. … Jalen Hurts ran for three touchdowns as part of the Eagles' 242-yard rushing day in a 40-29 win over the Saints. … Chris Jones recorded 3.5 sacks and forced a fumble, and Charvarius Ward and L'Jarius Sneed chipped in with interceptions, to help propel the Chiefs past the Cowboys, 19-9.

WEEK 12

With an impressive 41-10 victory over the Steelers, the Bengals swept their division rival for the first time in 12 seasons and put themselves in the thick of the AFC playoff hunt. "Beating these guys, for me twice and for some of those other guys three times straight, is a big change of the guard," said cornerback Mike Hilton, who had an interception-return touchdown just before halftime. "It's given us a lot of confidence, and guys are excited to see how the rest of the season plays out." Cincinnati scored the first four times it had the ball, and Hilton made it 31-3 when he picked off a pass and returned it 24 yards for a touchdown. "It was a big moment, it was an emotional moment," Bengals coach Zac Taylor said. "For Mike to turn around and go the other way with it really kind of catapulted us to what we wanted to do the rest of the day." Joe Mixon played a big role as well, rushing for 165 yards and two touchdowns to become the first NFL player since 2006 with two rushing TDs in four straight games in the same season.

- For the fourth straight year, the NFL's "My Cause My Cleats" allowed players to show their support for the causes most important to them.
- Tyrann Mathieu keyed a resurgent Chiefs defense that didn't yield more than 17 points in a game as the team won five in a row from Weeks 8-13.

Extra Points: Tua Tagovailoa completed 27 of 31 passes for 230 yards, which included a touchdown pass to Jaylen Waddle (9 receptions, 137 yards), and Xavien Howard grabbed an interception in the Dolphins' 33-10 win over Carolina. … Aaron Rodgers passed for 307 yards and two touchdowns and also rushed for a score in the Packers' 36-28 win over the Rams. … Deebo Samuel rushed for 66 yards and two TDs in the 49ers' 34-26 win over Minnesota, and in the process became the first wide receiver since 1970 to record a rushing touchdown in three consecutive games. … Pat Surtain II had a pair of interceptions, one that he brought back 70 yards for a touchdown, in the Broncos' 28-13 win over the Chargers. … Josh Allen passed for 260 yards and four TDs, two of those to Dawson Knox, and Tremaine Edmunds and Matt Milano each had eight tackles, helping Buffalo to a 31-6 decision at New Orleans. … Daniel Carlson's fifth field goal of the game, a 29-yarder in overtime, lifted the Raiders past Dallas, 36-33, in the most-watched NFL regular-season game since 1990.

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Darren Waller continued to be a big part of the Raiders' offense, catching 53 passes in the team's first 10 games.

WEEK 13

Kansas City and Miami each stretched their winning streaks to five games. The Chiefs, aiming for their sixth consecutive AFC West crown, parlayed a strong defensive effort into a 22-9 victory over the Broncos. Daniel Sorenson brought back an interception 75 yards for a fourth-quarter touchdown and K.C. stopped Denver on downs three times, one of those causing the Broncos to come up empty on a 20-play drive. "It was just beautiful to watch," said Chiefs coach Andy Reid. The Dolphins, meanwhile, continued the league's most impressive turnaround, pulling into the AFC playoff picture after starting the season 1-7. Tua Tagovailoa completed 30 of 41 passes for 244 yards, which included a pivotal fourth-quarter scoring toss to Isaiah Ford, in their 20-9 victory over the Giants. "We're just executing better," said linebacker Jerome Baker, who contributed three tackles and was part of a defense that allowed just 250 total yards and kept New York out of the end zone.

Extra Points: Washington won its fourth straight game, edging the Raiders, 17-15, behind Taylor Heinicke's two TD passes and Brian Jonhson's 48-yard field goal with 37 seconds to play. … Kyler Murray threw for two touchdowns and ran for two others in the Cardinals' 33-22 win at Chicago. … Tom Brady threw for 368 yards and four TDs, two of those to Rob Gronkowski, in Tampa Bay's 30-17 victory at Atlanta. … Justin Herbert had three touchdown passes and Tevaughn Campbell brought back a fumble 61 yards for a fourth-quarter score in the Chargers' 41-22 win at Cincinnati. … Amon-Ra St. Brown caught 10 passes, the last of those an 11-yard TD as time expired, to lift the Lions to their first victory of the season, 29-27 over Minnesota. … Carlos Dunlap had a sack that produced a safety and then swatted away a fourth-down pass near the goal line in the closing seconds to preserve Seattle's 30-23 win over the 49ers. … T.J. Watt became the second player since 1982 with at least 13 sacks in four straight seasons – joining Reggie White – when he recorded 3.5 sacks in the Steelers' 20-19 win over Baltimore.

SCORES & AWARDS

WEEK 10 / NOVEMBER 11-15

MIAMI 22, Baltimore 10
Buffalo 45, N.Y. JETS 17
WASHINGTON 29, Tampa Bay 19
DALLAS 43, Atlanta 3
TENNESSEE 23, New Orleans 21
INDIANAPOLIS 23, Jacksonville 17
PITTSBURGH 16, Detroit 16 (OT)
NEW ENGLAND 45, Cleveland 7
Minnesota 27, L.A. CHARGERS 20
Carolina 34, ARIZONA 10
PHILADELPHIA 30, Denver 13
GREEN BAY 17, Seattle 0
Kansas City 41, LAS VEGAS 14
SAN FRANCISCO 31, L.A. Rams 10
Byes: Chicago, Cincinnati, Houston, N.Y. Giants

PLAYERS OF THE WEEK
AFC Offense
Patrick Mahomes, QB, Kansas City
AFC Defense
Xavien Howard, CB, Miami
AFC Special Teams
E.J. Speed, LB, Indianapolis
NFC Offense
Deebo Samuel, WR, San Francisco
NFC Defense
Darius Slay, CB, Philadelphia
NFC Special Teams
Zane Gonzalez, K, Carolina
Pepsi Zero Sugar NFL Rookie
Micah Parsons, LB, Dallas

WEEK 11 / NOVEMBER 18-22

New England 25, ATLANTA 0
Baltimore 16, CHICAGO 13
CLEVELAND 13, Detroit 10
MINNESOTA 34, Green Bay 31
Houston 22, TENNESSEE 13
Indianapolis 41, BUFFALO 15
Miami 24, N.Y. JETS 17
PHILADELPHIA 40, New Orleans 29
San Francisco 30, JACKSONVILLE 10
Washington 27, CAROLINA 21
Cincinnati 32, LAS VEGAS 13
Arizona 23, SEATTLE 13
KANSAS CITY 19, Dallas 9
L.A. CHARGERS 41, Pittsburgh 37
TAMPA BAY 30, N.Y. Giants 10
Byes: Denver, L.A. Rams

PLAYERS OF THE WEEK
AFC Offense
Jonathan Taylor, RB, Indianapolis
AFC Defense
Chris Jones, DT, Kansas City
AFC Special Teams
Evan McPherson, K, Cincinnati
NFC Offense
Justin Jefferson, WR, Minnesota
NFC Defense
Chandler Jones, LB, Arizona
NFC Special Teams
Jake Elliott, K, Philadelphia
Pepsi Zero Sugar NFL Rookie
Elijah Moore, WR, N.Y. Jets

WEEK 12 / NOVEMBER 25-29

Chicago 16, DETROIT 14
Las Vegas 36, DALLAS 33 (OT)
Buffalo 31, NEW ORLEANS 6
Atlanta 21, JACKSONVILLE 14
MIAMI 33, Carolina 10
N.Y. Jets 21, HOUSTON 14
N.Y. GIANTS 13, Philadelphia 7
CINCINNATI 41, Pittsburgh 10
Tampa Bay 38, INDIANAPOLIS 31
NEW ENGLAND 36, Tennessee 13
DENVER 28, L.A. Chargers 13
GREEN BAY 36, L.A. Rams 28
SAN FRANCISCO 34, Minnesota 26
BALTIMORE 16, Cleveland 10
WASHINGTON 17, Seattle 15
Byes: Arizona, Kansas City

PLAYERS OF THE WEEK
AFC Offense
Joe Mixon, RB, Cincinnati
AFC Defense
Pat Surtain II, CB, Denver
AFC Special Teams
Daniel Carlson, K, Las Vegas
NFC Offense
Leonard Fournette, RB, Tampa Bay
NFC Defense
Rasul Douglas, CB, Green Bay
NFC Special Teams
Thomas Morstead, P, Atlanta
Pepsi Zero Sugar NFL Rookie
Pat Surtain II, CB, Denver

WEEK 13 / DECEMBER 2-6

Dallas 27, NEW ORLEANS 17
Arizona 33, CHICAGO 22
Indianapolis 31, HOUSTON 0
L.A. Chargers 41, CINCINNATI 22
DETROIT 29, Minnesota 27
MIAMI 20, N.Y. Giants 9
Philadelphia 33, N.Y. JETS 18
Tampa Bay 30, ATLANTA 17
L.A. RAMS 37, Jacksonville 7
Washington 17, LAS VEGAS 15
PITTSBURGH 20, Baltimore 19
SEATTLE 30, San Francisco 23
KANSAS CITY 22, Denver 9
New England 14, BUFFALO 10
Byes: Carolina, Cleveland, Green Bay, Tennessee

PLAYERS OF THE WEEK
AFC Offense
Justin Herbert, QB, L.A. Chargers
AFC Defense
T.J. Watt, LB, Pittsburgh
AFC Special Teams
Michael Palardy, P, Miami
NFC Offense
Jared Goff, QB, Detroit
NFC Defense
Jordan Hicks, LB, Arizona
NFC Special Teams
Travis Homer, RB, Seattle
Pepsi Zero Sugar NFL Rookie
Zach Wilson, QB, N.Y. Jets

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PACKERS WRAP UP NFC'S TOP SEED

Powered by QB Aaron Rodgers, it's another record-setting season in the "Land of Lambeau"

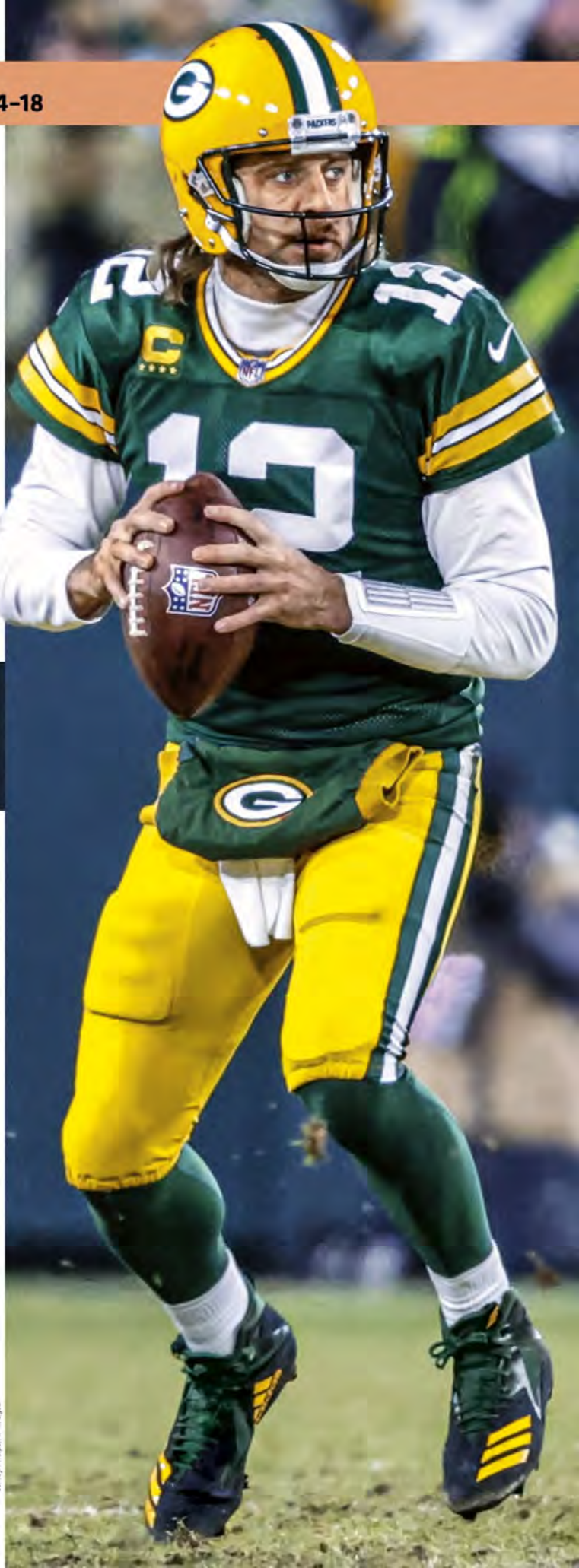
USING A LATE-SEASON SURGE, the Packers captured the NFC North title and became the first team in league history to win 13 games in three consecutive seasons. More importantly, they secured the conference's top seed and earned a coveted first-round playoff bye.

A 37-10 victory over Minnesota in Week 17 made it official, a result spurred on by Aaron Rodgers' two touchdown passes, a pair of A.J. Dillon scoring runs, and a revved-up defense that allowed just 27 rushing yards.

"It definitely feels amazing," said Dillon of clinching the No. 1 seed. "It's something we're continuously working toward, we're striving toward, to get that. We know how important it is to have teams come through Lambeau (Field)."

Green Bay finished the regular season a perfect 8-0 on its home turf, which included a 45-30 come-from-behind win over Chicago in Week 14. Aaron Jones scored twice in a one-minute span of the third quarter – rushing for a 3-yard touchdown and then catching a 23-yard TD pass – to lift the team out of a halftime deficit.

In Week 15, the Packers proved they could be equally tough on the road, edging the Ravens, 31-30, to secure the division crown. A week later on Christmas Day, Rodgers became the Packers' career leader in



Aaron Rodgers was dialed in during 2021, throwing for 37 TDs with just four interceptions as the Packers went 13-4 to win the NFC North.

Jeffrey Phelps/AP Images

FINAL 2021 NFL STANDINGS

*+Division Champion *Wild Card*

AFC EAST	W-L-T	PCT	PF	PA
Buffalo+	11-6-0	.647	483	289
New England*	10-7-0	.588	462	303
Miami	9-8-0	.529	341	373
N.Y. Jets	4-13-0	.235	310	504

AFC NORTH	W-L-T	PCT	PF	PA
Cincinnati+	10-7-0	.588	460	376
Pittsburgh*	9-7-1	.559	343	398
Baltimore	8-9-0	.471	387	392
Cleveland	8-9-0	.471	349	371

AFC SOUTH	W-L-T	PCT	PF	PA
Tennessee+	12-5-0	.706	419	354
Indianapolis	9-8-0	.529	451	365
Houston	4-13-0	.235	280	452
Jacksonville	3-14-0	.176	253	457

AFC WEST	W-L-T	PCT	PF	PA
Kansas City+	12-5-0	.706	480	364
Las Vegas*	10-7-0	.588	374	439
L.A. Chargers	9-8-0	.529	474	459
Denver	7-10-0	.412	335	322

NFC EAST	W-L-T	PCT	PF	PA
Dallas+	12-5-0	.706	530	358
Philadelphia*	9-8-0	.529	444	385
Washington	7-10-0	.412	335	434
N.Y. Giants	4-13-0	.235	258	416

NFC NORTH	W-L-T	PCT	PF	PA
Green Bay+	13-4-0	.765	450	371
Minnesota	8-9-0	.471	425	426
Chicago	6-11-0	.353	311	407
Detroit	3-13-1	.206	325	467

NFC SOUTH	W-L-T	PCT	PF	PA
Tampa Bay+	13-4-0	.765	511	353
New Orleans	9-8-0	.529	364	335
Atlanta	7-10-0	.412	313	459
Carolina	5-12-0	.294	304	404

NFC WEST	W-L-T	PCT	PF	PA
L.A. Rams+	12-5-0	.706	460	372
Arizona*	11-6-0	.647	449	366
San Francisco*	10-7-0	.588	427	365
Seattle	7-10-0	.412	395	366

Emilee Chinn/AP Images

Joe Mixon set career highs in rushing yards (1,205) and rushing touchdowns (13) for the AFC North champion Bengals.

Robert Quinn led all NFC players with 18.5 sacks, including at least a half-sack in each of the Bears' final nine games.

touchdown passes, while Rasul Douglas' interception in the final minute – the last of the team's four on the day – locked up a 24-22 win over Cleveland. Rodgers threw for three TDs in the game, surpassing Hall of Famer Brett Favre's team record of 442.

"Hey, 12, congratulations, man, on passing my touchdown record," Favre said in a message that ran on the Lambeau Field videoboard. "I have one request. Go get us another Super Bowl. Congrats."

WEEK 14

After leading for most of regulation, and then trailing in overtime, the 49ers pulled out a thrilling 26-23 overtime victory over the Bengals. Jimmy Garoppolo completed 27 of 41 passes for 296 yards and helped stake San Francisco to a 20-6 fourth-quarter lead with a 14-yard TD pass to George Kittle (13 receptions, 151 yards), while Deebo Samuel contributed a 27-yard scoring run and Robbie Gould made field goals from 33 and 24 yards. Cincinnati, however, forced the extra session with two late Joe Burrow-to-Ja'Marr Chase touchdown passes, and moved ahead on Evan McPherson's 41-yard field goal on the first possession of overtime. Garoppolo answered by completing all five of his passes on the ensuing drive, the last of those a 12-yarder to Brandon Aiyuk, who kept his balance and reached over the pylon for the game-winning TD. The 49ers' defense did its part as well, with Nick Bosa collecting two of the team's five sacks. "If we just keep winning, we don't have to look at anybody else," 49ers coach Kyle Shanahan said after his team improved to 7-6.

Extra Points: Matthew Stafford shined in the Rams' 30-23 triumph over the Cardinals, throwing for 287 yards and three TDs – highlighted by a 52-yarder to Van Jefferson in the third quarter that put Los Angeles ahead for good. … Melvin Gordon rushed for 111 yards and two touchdowns in the Broncos' 38-10 win over Detroit. … For the fourth time in five games, Kansas City allowed fewer than 10 points, defeating the Raiders, 48-9. … Justin Herbert became the first NFL player with at least 30 touchdown passes in each of his first two seasons, throwing for 275 yards and two scores in the Chargers' 37-21 victory over the Giants. … Micah Parsons recorded a sack for the sixth consecutive game to help power the Cowboys past Washington, 27-20. … Tom Brady completed his 7,143rd career pass, breaking Drew Brees' NFL record, as part of his 363-yard, two-TD day in the Buccaneers' 33-27 overtime win against Buffalo.

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"FINISHING AS THE NO. 1 SEED, IT'S AWESOME. BUT IT'S FOR REAL NOW. - TENNESSEE LEFT TACKLE TAYLOR LEWAN, AFTER THE TEAM'S WEEK 18 WIN OVER HOUSTON SECURED A FIRST-ROUND PLAYOFF BYE

WEEK 15

A critical AFC West contest was won by Kansas City, which rallied to defeat the Chargers, 34-28, in overtime, and solidify its hold on the division. Travis Kelce capped a 191-yard receiving effort with his 34-yard catch-and-run TD from Patrick Mahomes minutes into the extra session. "I don't think I've ever been part of a walk-off touchdown or anything like that, so to be in that moment, find him underneath, and him making such a dynamic play where, I mean, he cut back, ran by people," said Mahomes after delivering the Chiefs their seventh consecutive win. An 8-yard Justin Herbert-to-Keenan Allen TD pass had put L.A. ahead, 28-21, with 2:18 remaining, but Mahomes answered by taking his team 75 yards in eight plays, the last of those a 7-yard touchdown throw to Kelce that forced OT. Kansas City's defense kept the game close by stopping the Chargers in the red zone three times – on downs at the 5-yard line in the first quarter and at the 1 at the end of the first half, and with a Ben Niemann fumble recovery at the 2-yard line early in the fourth quarter.

Extra Points: Joe Haden's fourth-down tackle of the Titans' Nick Westbrook-Ikhine – just inches shy of a first down at the Steelers 10-yard line in the game's final minute – preserved Pittsburgh's 19-13 win. … Dallas forced four turnovers, among them Trevon Diggs' 10th interception of the season, in its 21-6 victory over the Giants. … Evan McPherson kicked three field goals, including 53- and 58-yarders, as the Bengals edged Denver, 15-10. … Jared Goff threw three touchdown passes and Craig Reynolds rushed for 112 yards to power the Lions' 30-12 victory over Arizona. … Cameron Jordan recorded two sacks and Chauncey Gardner-Johnson had seven tackles and his second interception of the season in the Saints' 9-0 shutout of Tampa Bay. … In a rare Tuesday night game, the Eagles rallied from an early 10-0 deficit against Washington, getting two touchdown runs and a TD pass from Jalen Hurts on their way to a 27-17 win.

Jalen Hurts was the spark for the Eagles' run to the playoffs. He threw 16 TD passes and his 784 rushing yards led all NFL quarterbacks.

Jaylen Waddle set an NFL rookie record with 104 receptions. He made 10 of those catches in Miami's 20-3 win over the Saints in Week 16.

WEEK 16

Joe Burrow threw for 525 yards – the fourth-most in a game in NFL history – to lead the Bengals past the Ravens, 41-21, and put Cincinnati in control of the AFC North race. "We're right where we want to be," said Burrow, who completed 37 of 46 passes with four touchdowns, including two to Tee Higgins. "We knew we had a chance to be in this position in training camp. We knew the kind of team we had." Higgins finished with 12 receptions for 194 yards and Ja'Marr Chase added seven catches for 125 yards. "[Burrow] is making really good decisions, and the ball was coming out quick when we needed it to," said Bengals coach Zac Taylor. "You can just tell when a guy's got it, and today he had it for sure." Baltimore was in front, 7-3, late in the first quarter before Joe Mixon's 1-yard TD run put the Bengals ahead. Burrow then followed with a 68-yard touchdown throw to Tyler Boyd, and by halftime Cincinnati held a 31-14 lead. On the defensive side of the ball, Trey Hendrickson became just the second player since 1982 to register at least a half-sack in 11 consecutive games.

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- The Raiders' Daniel Carlson kicked five game-winning goals on the season, including one in OT in Week 18 to clinch an AFC playoff spot.
- Stefon Diggs had 25 catches and three TD receptions in the Bills' final four games, all wins on their way to the AFC East crown.
- Coach Mike Vrabel oversaw a surge that earned the Titans the AFC's top seed for the third time in franchise history.

Extra Points: Josh Allen threw for 314 yards and three TDs to carry Buffalo past New England, 33-21, in a key AFC East showdown. … Nik Needham retuned an interception 28 yards for a touchdown and Emmanuel Ogbah had two of the Dolphins' eight sacks in their 20-3 victory over the Saints, making Miami the first team in NFL history with both a seven-game winning streak and a seven-game losing streak in the same season. … Davis Mills completed 21 of 27 passes for 254 yards and two touchdowns in the Texans' 41-29 win over the Chargers. … The Chiefs defeated the Steelers, 36-10, to clinch their sixth consecutive AFC West title, while the Buccaneers' 32-6 victory over the Panthers earned Tampa Bay its first NFC South crown since 2007. Dallas, a 56-14 victor over Washington, won the NFC East.

WEEK 17

After an emotional week that saw their legendary coach, John Madden, pass away at the age of 85, the Raiders went out and upended the host Colts, 23-20, to keep their postseason hopes alive. Fans at Lucas Oil Stadium watched a pregame video tribute to Madden and held a moment of silence for the coach, and Raiders players wore a "JM" sticker on their helmets. The back-and-forth tilt saw Las Vegas take a fourth-quarter lead on Derek Carr's 11-yard TD pass to Hunter Renfrow, but Indianapolis tied things at 20-20 on a 41-yard Michael Badgley field goal with 1:56 remaining. Carr answered with the game-winning drive, the big play coming on Renfrow's 24-yard reception on third-and-10. The catch set up Daniel Carlson for a 33-yard field goal as time expired, his fourth game-winner of the season. "I'm just wired, my mind, my heart, just that way, to love those moments," said Carr, who threw for 255 yards. Zay Jones led the Raiders with eight catches for 120 yards.

On his 67-yard TD run against the Patriots in Week 15, Jonathan Taylor reached a speed of 22.13 mph, the fastest of any ball carrier during the 2021 season.

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SCORES & AWARDS

WEEK 14 / DECEMBER 9-13

MINNESOTA 36, Pittsburgh 28
Dallas 27, WASHINGTON 20
TENNESSEE 20, Jacksonville 0
Seattle 33, HOUSTON 13
KANSAS CITY 48, Las Vegas 9
New Orleans 30, N.Y. JETS 9
Atlanta 29, CAROLINA 21
CLEVELAND 24, Baltimore 22
L.A. CHARGERS 37, N.Y. Giants 21
DENVER 38, Detroit 10
San Francisco 26, CINCINNATI 23 (OT)
TAMPA BAY 33, Buffalo 27 (OT)
GREEN BAY 45, Chicago 30
L.A. Rams 30, ARIZONA 23

Byes: Indianapolis, Miami, New England, Philadelphia

PLAYERS OF THE WEEK
AFC Offense
Justin Herbert, QB, L.A. Chargers
AFC Defense
Mike Hughes, CB, Kansas City
AFC Special Teams
Brandon McManus, K, Denver
NFC Offense
George Kittle, TE, San Francisco
NFC Defense
Aaron Donald, DL, L.A. Rams
NFC Special Teams
Jakeem Grant, WR, Chicago
Pepsi Zero Sugar NFL Rookie
Micah Parsons, LB, Dallas

WEEK 15 / DECEMBER 16-21

L.A. RAMS 20, Seattle 10
PHILADELPHIA 27, Washington 17
Kansas City 34, L.A. CHARGERS 28
INDIANAPOLIS 27, New England 17
Dallas 21, N.Y. GIANTS 6
Houston 30, JACKSONVILLE 16
PITTSBURGH 19, Tennessee 13
MIAMI 31, N.Y. Jets 24
DETROIT 30, Arizona 12
BUFFALO 31, Carolina 14
Cincinnati 15, DENVER 10
SAN FRANCISCO 31, Atlanta 13
Green Bay 31, BALTIMORE 30
New Orleans 9, TAMPA BAY 0
Las Vegas 16, CLEVELAND 14
Minnesota 17, CHICAGO 9

PLAYERS OF THE WEEK
AFC Offense
Travis Kelce, TE, Kansas City
AFC Defense
Darius Leonard, LB, Indianapolis
AFC Special Teams
Tremon Smith, DB, Houston
NFC Offense
Aaron Rodgers, QB, Green Bay
NFC Defense
Cameron Jordan, DE, New Orleans
NFC Special Teams
Riley Patterson, K, Detroit
Pepsi Zero Sugar NFL Rookie
Brandin Echols, CB, N.Y. Jets

WEEK 16 / DECEMBER 23-27

TENNESSEE 20, San Francisco 17
GREEN BAY 24, Cleveland 22
Indianapolis 22, ARIZONA 16
PHILADELPHIA 34, N.Y. Giants 10
L.A. Rams 30, MINNESOTA 23
Buffalo 33, NEW ENGLAND 21
Tampa Bay 32, CAROLINA 6
N.Y. JETS 26, Jacksonville 21
ATLANTA 20, Detroit 16
HOUSTON 41, L.A. Chargers 29
CINCINNATI 41, Baltimore 21
Chicago 25, SEATTLE 24
KANSAS CITY 36, Pittsburgh 10
LAS VEGAS 17, Denver 13
DALLAS 56, Washington 14
Miami 20, NEW ORLEANS 3

PLAYERS OF THE WEEK
AFC Offense
Joe Burrow, QB, Cincinnati
AFC Defense
Tavierre Thomas, DB, Houston
AFC Special Teams
Braxton Berrios, WR, N.Y. Jets
NFC Offense
Dak Prescott, QB, Dallas
NFC Defense
Foyesade Oluokun, LB, Atlanta
NFC Special Teams
Brandon Powell, WR, L.A. Rams
Pepsi Zero Sugar NFL Rookie
Zach Wilson, QB, N.Y. Jets

WEEK 17 / JANUARY 2-3

PHILADELPHIA, 20, Washington 16
L.A. Rams 20, BALTIMORE 19
Tampa Bay 28, N.Y. JETS 24
TENNESSEE 34, Miami 3
NEW ENGLAND 50, Jacksonville 10
Las Vegas 23, INDIANAPOLIS 20
CINCINNATI 34, Kansas City 31
CHICAGO 29, N.Y. Giants 3
BUFFALO 29, Atlanta 15
SAN FRANCISCO 23, Houston 7
L.A. CHARGERS 34, Denver 13
NEW ORLEANS 18, Carolina 10
SEATTLE 51, Detroit 29
Arizona 25, DALLAS 22
GREEN BAY 37, Minnesota 10
PITTSBURGH 26, Cleveland 14

PLAYERS OF THE WEEK
AFC Offense
Ja'Marr Chase, WR, Cincinnati
AFC Defense
T.J. Watt, LB, Pittsburgh
AFC Special Teams
Daniel Carlson, K, Las Vegas
NFC Offense
Rashaad Penny, RB, Seattle
NFC Defense
Cameron Jordan, DE, New Orleans
NFC Special Teams
Matt Prater, K, Arizona
Pepsi Zero Sugar NFL Rookie
Ja'Marr Chase, WR, Cincinnati

Extra Points: D'Onta Foreman rushed for 132 yards and a TD as the Titans defeated the Dolphins, 34-3, to clinch their second straight AFC South championship. … With Ja'Marr Chase catching 11 passes for an NFL rookie record 266 yards and three touchdowns, the Bengals rallied from a 14-point deficit to defeat Kansas City, 34-31, and claim their first AFC North title since 2015. … The Patriots earned their 12th playoff berth in 13 seasons with a 50-10 win over the Jaguars. … Russell Wilson's four TD passes carried Seattle past Detroit, 51-29. … Pittsburgh topped the Browns, 26-14, ensuring coach Mike Tomlin an NFL-record 15th consecutive season with a .500-or-better mark.

WEEK 18

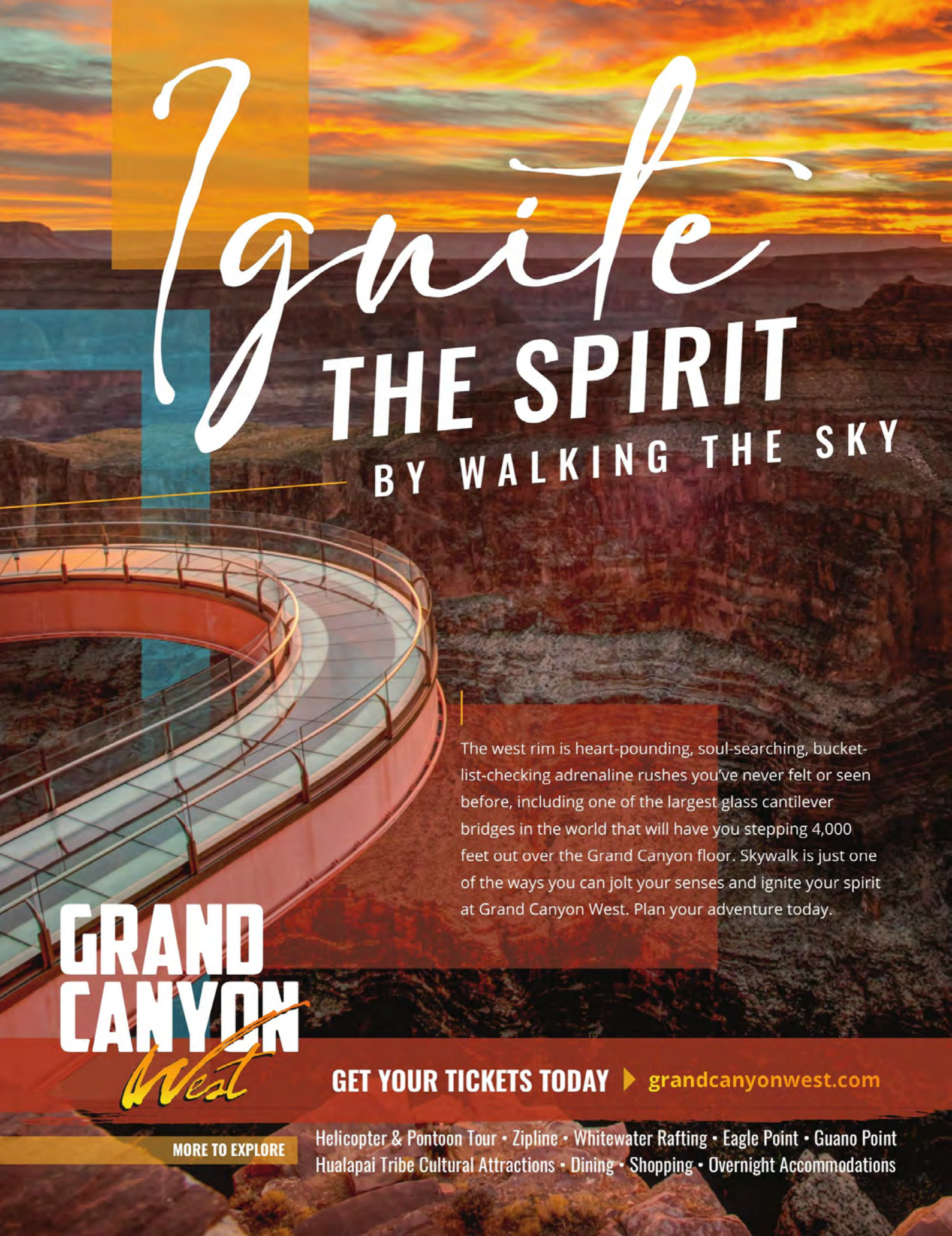
The NFC West became the lone division to send three teams to the postseason, with the 49ers earning a wild card berth after battling back from 17 points down to upend the Rams, 27-24. Jimmy Garoppolo threw for 316 yards and sent the game into overtime with a 14-yard TD pass to Jauan Jennings with 26 seconds remaining in regulation. In overtime, Robbie Gould kicked a go-ahead 24-yard field goal and Ambry Thomas ended the game with his first career interception. "Getting off to a slow start and then coming back like we did, it took everything," said Garoppolo. "It was worth it, though. It was one of those games you won't forget any time soon." Even with the loss, the Rams clinched the division, thanks to Seattle's 38-30 win over the Cardinals, who settled for a wild card berth. The results set up a first-round showdown between the Rams and Cardinals. "Everybody is zero and zero, and our guys understand that," said Arizona coach Kliff Kingsbury. "We're disappointed today, but we got to get it out of our system quick and come back because anything can happen once you make the postseason."

Extra Points: There were an NFL-record 34 games decided by a game-winning score on the final play, including the 272nd – and final – game of the season. The Raiders were the victors, 35-32 over the Chargers in overtime, getting a 47-yard field goal from Daniel Carlson as time expired to claim an AFC wild card berth. … The Rams' Cooper Kupp became the first player in 16 seasons to win the receiving "triple crown," leading the league in receptions (145), receiving yards (1,947), and touchdown catches (16). … T.J. Watt recorded a sack in the Steelers' 16-13 overtime win at Baltimore, giving him 22.5 on the year to equal Michael Strahan's NFL single-season record.

WEEK 19 / JANUARY 8-9

Kansas City 28, DENVER 24
Dallas 51, PHILADELPHIA 26
DETROIT 37, Green Bay 30
JACKSONVILLE 26, Indianapolis 11
Washington 22, N.Y. GIANTS 7
MINNESOTA 31, Chicago 17
Tennessee 28, HOUSTON 25
Pittsburgh 16, BALTIMORE 13 (OT)
CLEVELAND 21, Cincinnati 16
San Francisco 27, L.A. RAMS 24 (OT)
TAMPA BAY 41, Carolina 17
Seattle 38, ARIZONA 30
MIAMI 33, New England 24
New Orleans 30, ATLANTA 20
BUFFALO 27, N.Y. Jets 10
LAS VEGAS 35, L.A. Chargers 32 (OT)

PLAYERS OF THE WEEK
AFC Offense
Ryan Tannehill, QB, Tennessee
AFC Defense
Maxx Crosby, DE, Las Vegas
AFC Special Teams
Daniel Carlson, K, Las Vegas
NFC Offense
Dak Prescott, QB, Dallas
NFC Defense
Tracy Walker, S, Detroit
NFC Special Teams
Robbie Gould, K, San Francisco
Pepsi Zero Sugar NFL Rookie
Amon-Ra St. Brown, WR, Detroit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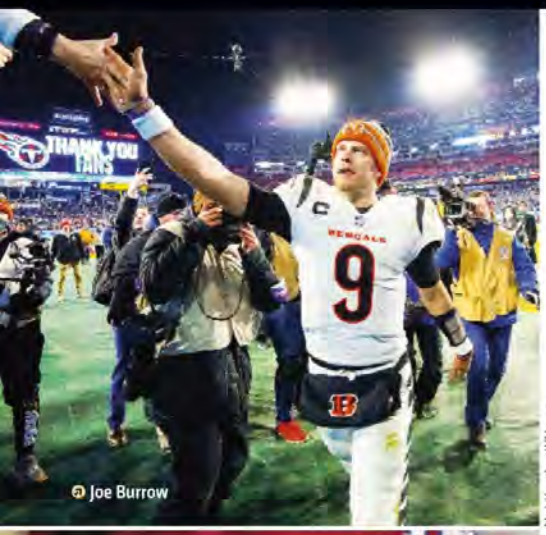

Joe Burrow

Mark Humphrey/AP Images

Tyreek Hill

Charlie Riedel/AP Images

Matt Gay

John Raoux/AP Images

AFC WILD CARD

CINCINNATI 26, Las Vegas 19

The Bengals collected their first playoff win in 31 years, thanks to QB Joe Burrow (24 of 34, 244 yards, 2 TDs) and a game-saving play by linebacker Germaine Pratt. Cincinnati scored on its first four possessions, highlighted by TD receptions from C.J. Uzomah and Tyler Boyd, to take a 20-13 halftime lead. Still trailing by seven in the game's final minute, the Raiders drove deep into Bengals territory before Pratt's interception at the 2-yard line ended the threat.

BUFFALO 47, New England 17

Josh Allen threw five touchdown passes – two of those to Dawson Knox – as Buffalo became the first team in the Super Bowl era to score TDs on its first seven possessions in a playoff game. Devin Singletary rushed for 81 yards and scored twice for the Bills, who totaled 300 yards of offense by halftime. Levi Wallace and Micah Hyde intercepted passes in the win.

KANSAS CITY 42, Pittsburgh 21

After a slow start that included allowing a fumble-return touchdown, the Chiefs found their footing to blow past the Steelers and move closer to a third straight Super Bowl appearance. Patrick Mahomes threw for 404 yards and five TDs, one of those a 12-yarder to Byron Pringle that put Kansas City ahead for good in the second quarter. Tight end Travis Kelce also caught a TD pass and later threw one to Pringle.

AFC DIVISIONAL

Cincinnati 19, TENNESSEE 16

Logan Wilson's interception with 20 seconds remaining – the Bengals' third pickoff of the day – set up Evan McPherson for a 52-yard field goal as time expired. McPherson earlier made field goals from 38, 45, and 54 yards, and Joe Mixon's 16-yard touchdown run capped a 9-play, 65-yard drive to open the third quarter that put the Bengals in front, 16-6. Joe Burrow threw for 348 yards in the win.

KANSAS CITY 42, Buffalo 36 (OT)

An instant classic was won by the Chiefs, who prevailed on Patrick Mahomes' 8-yard TD pass to Travis Kelce in overtime. There were 25 points scored in the final 1:54 of regulation, including Gabriel Davis' fourth TD catch of the day that put the Bills in front, 36-33, with 13 seconds remaining. But Mahomes (33 of 44, 378 yards, 3 TDs) answered with completions to Tyreek Hill for 19 yards and Kelce for 25 yards to position Harrison Butker for a clutch 49-yard field goal that sent the game into OT.

NFC WILD CARD

TAMPA BAY 31, Philadelphia 15

The defending Super Bowl champions methodically pulled away for victory, building a 17-0 halftime lead and holding a shutout until the fourth quarter. Bucs QB Tom Brady threw for 271 yards and connected with Mike Evans (9 receptions, 117 yards) and Rob Gronkowski for touchdowns, while the defense forced three turnovers. LB Shaquil Barrett stopped the Eagles' best scoring opportunity of the first half with a goal-line interception.

San Francisco 23, DALLAS 17

A balanced attack carried the visiting 49ers to victory. Jimmy Garoppolo threw for 172 yards, while the ground game was sparked by Elijah Mitchell (96 yards) and Deebo Samuel (72 yards), who each ran for touchdowns. Robbie Gould kicked three field goals and K'Waun Williams added an interception for the victors, who held on when the Cowboys' final drive ended at the 49ers 24-yard line as time expired.

LOS ANGELES RAMS 34, Arizona 11

The Rams were dominant on both sides of the ball in eliminating their NFC West rivals. QB Matthew Stafford accounted for three TDs – firing scoring passes to Cooper Kupp and Odell Beckham Jr. and running for a touchdown of his own. On defense, L.A. allowed just 183 total yards, with Von Miller leading the way with six tackles and a sack.

NFC DIVISIONAL

San Francisco 13, GREEN BAY 10

Special teams played a pivotal role for the 49ers. Jimmie Ward blocked a field-goal attempt in the first half, and with under five minutes remaining in regulation, Jordan Willis blocked a punt that Talanoa Hufanga picked up and ran 6 yards for the game-tying touchdown. After the 49ers forced a three-and-out, Robbie Gould made his 20th postseason field goal without a miss, a 45-yarder as time ran out.

Los Angeles 30, TAMPA BAY 27

After once holding a 27-3 lead, the Rams needed Matt Gay's 30-yard field goal on the final play of regulation to edge the Bucs. Matthew Stafford threw for 366 yards and two touchdowns, and his 1-yard QB sneak put L.A. up by 24 points midway through the third quarter. Tampa Bay would then rally and tie the game with 42 seconds to play, before Stafford connected with Cooper Kupp (9 receptions, 183 yards, 1 TD) for gains of 20 and 44 yards that set up Gay's decisive kick.

The AFC Championship Game recap is on page 70.

The NFC Championship Game recap is on page 48.

LIVE FROM L.A.

THE STORY OF PRO FOOTBALL IN LOS ANGELES IS FULL OF ACTION AND ADVENTURE – AND INCLUDES A NUMBER OF AWARD-WINNING PERFORMANCES.

BY ALEX MARVEZ

The Super Bowl's return to Los Angeles marks another compelling chapter in what already has been a wild "True Hollywood Story." Some elements about pro football's history in Southern California sound more fiction than fact, yet are anything but:

- The NFL's first team hailing from Los Angeles never actually played any of its regular-season games there.
- The first logo design to appear on an NFL helmet was created by a player who spent an entire summer painting rams horns on them in his garage.
- Los Angeles hosted what's recognized as the first Pro Bowl (1939), and an iconic stadium that once banned professional sports became the site of the NFL's first Super Bowl (1967) and first post-AAFL merger Pro Bowl (1951).
- Two teams that staged their own version of "Escape from L.A." to play elsewhere for decades would ultimately return to not only fill a 21-year NFL void in the region, but also share the same state-of-the-art facility that is hosting this year's championship game.

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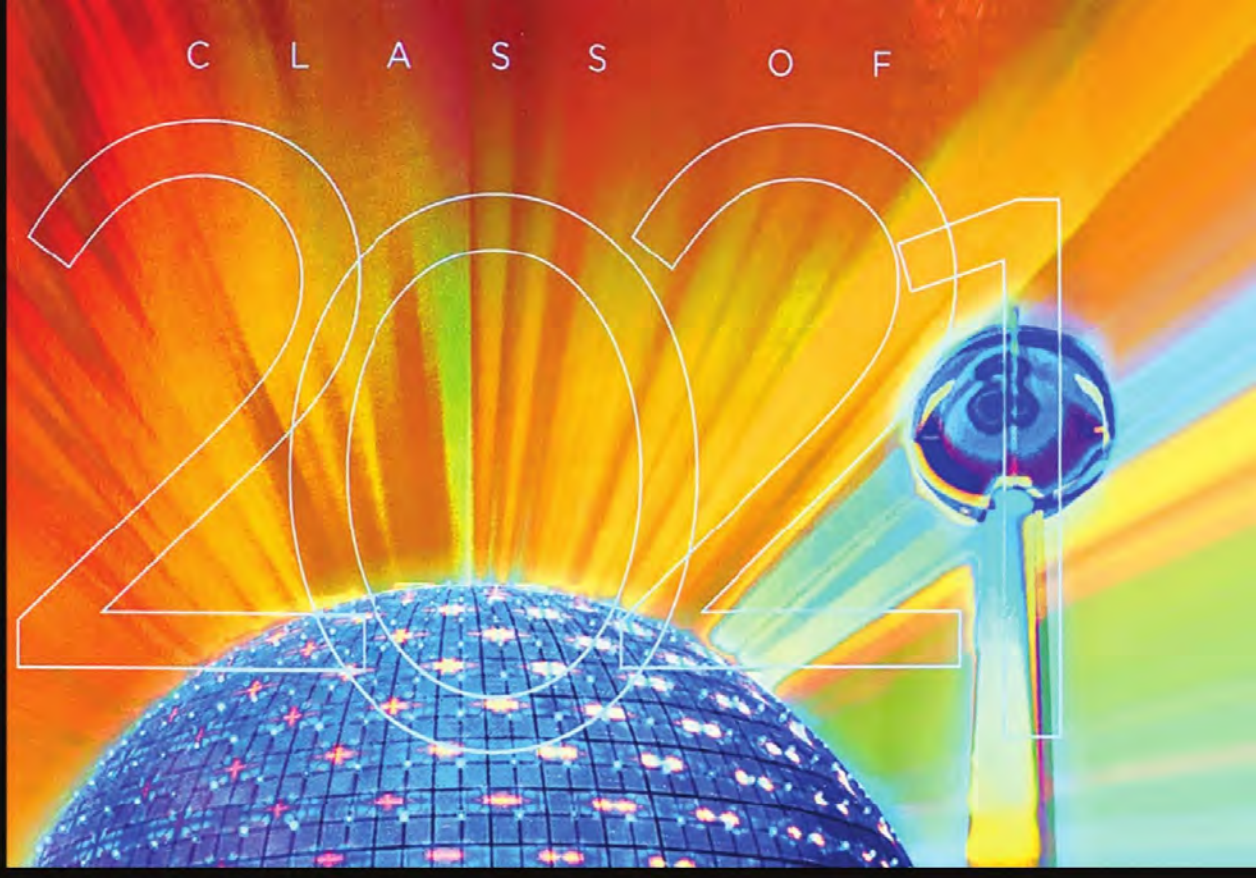

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Los Angeles' two pro football teams – the Chargers and the Rams – clashed in a preseason game last August at SoFi Stadium. The Rams returned to L.A. in 2016; the Chargers followed a year later.

Tom Hauck/AP Images

Pro Football Hall of Famer Merlin Olsen, who played for the Rams from 1962-1976, became a popular actor whose credits included NBC's *Little House on the Prairie* and *Father Murphy*.

Vicky Lang/AP Images

Rick Stewart/Getty Images

Troy Aikman was the MVP of the most recent Super Bowl played in Los Angeles, throwing four TD passes in Dallas' win over Buffalo in Super Bowl XXVII at the Rose Bowl.

Rusty Kennedy/AP Images

In 1979, Georgia Frontiere became the NFL's first female owner of the Super Bowl era when she took over the L.A. Rams. Two decades later, the Rams – at the time based in St. Louis – won Super Bowl XXXIV.

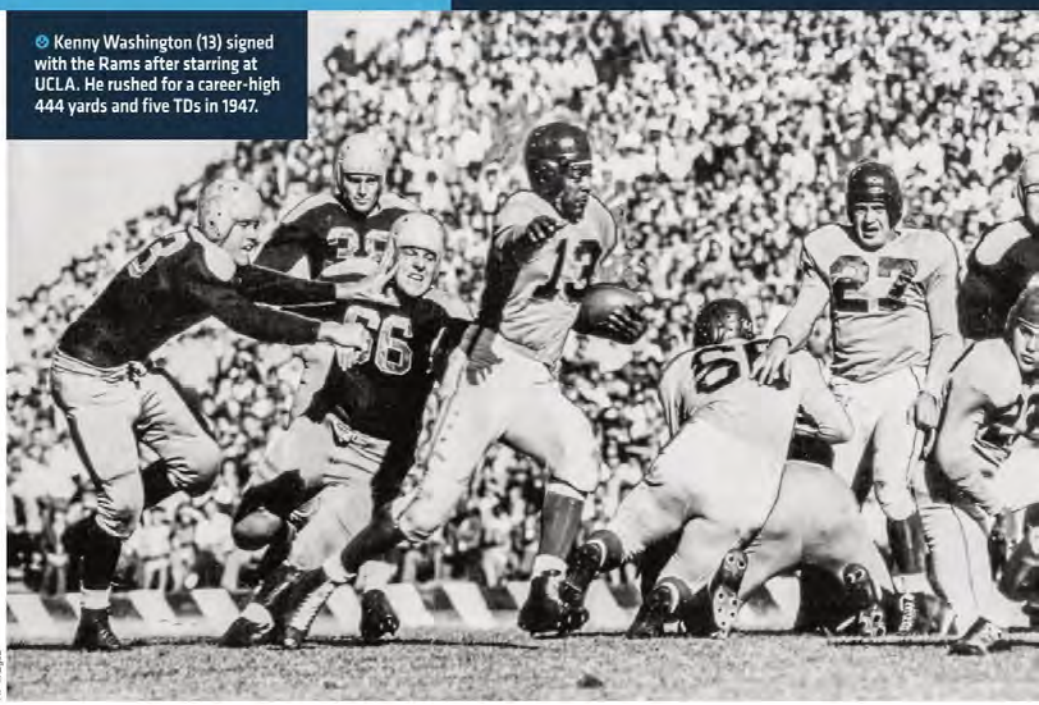
AP Images

Orlando Sentinel/MCT

"[L.A.] IS A REALLY SPECIAL PLACE. IT'S THE ENTERTAINMENT CAPITAL OF THE WORLD. THERE'S NO OTHER CITY QUITE LIKE IT." –JOHN SPANOS

Sid Gillman, regarded as one of the game's greatest offensive minds, was head coach of the Rams from 1955-59 and then coached the AFL's Chargers for 10 seasons, including when the team played in Los Angeles in 1960.

Harold "Brick" Muller was player-coach for the 1926 Los Angeles Buccaneers, the first NFL team to represent the city. An All-American at Cal-Berkeley, he guided the Bucs to a 6-3-1 record in their lone season in the league.



AP Images

Kenny Washington (13) signed with the Rams after starring at UCLA. He rushed for a career-high 444 yards and five TDs in 1947.

It was nearly a century ago when the NFL first called Los Angeles "home." However, the Los Angeles Buccaneers, which joined the nascent league in 1926 with a roster comprised of native Californians and players from West Coast colleges, never played a regular-season game in the city. These Bucs actually were based out of Chicago as a touring squad – going 6-3-1 in what was then a 22-team circuit — before disbanding the following season.

NFL historian Michael MacCambridge has written that the league wanted to stage games in L.A. for marketing and expansion purposes despite the inherent travel difficulties of the day. While the Buccaneers did play two exhibition contests there, using it as a home base wasn't feasible because the region's top stadium – the Los Angeles Coliseum – prohibited professional games during an era when college and other amateur sports reigned supreme.

By the time the Rams arrived from Cleveland in 1946, the environment had changed. But in exchange for access to the facility, Coliseum management demanded that team owner Dan Reeves add an African-American player. None had played in the NFL for 12 years because of an unwritten agreement among owners.

The Rams fulfilled the requirement by signing two UCLA stars: wide receiver Woody Strode and running back Kenny Washington. Strode used football as a launching pad to prolific careers in acting, directing, and even pro wrestling. Washington made more of a football impact for the Rams, including a 92-yard touchdown run that still stands as the longest in franchise history.

Two years after Strode and Washington, the Rams made a different kind of history. Running back Fred Gehrke was a part-time artist looking to add some spice to the club's plain brown leather helmet. He painted it blue and added yellow-and-gold horns – a stylization Reeves enjoyed so much that he paid Gehrke $1 per helmet to customize 75 of them. The NFL gave its blessing for the Rams to wear them, and the franchise's logo and color scheme would become among the most iconic in sports.

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These Rams didn't just look the part; they played it, too. From 1949-1951, they appeared in three consecutive NFL championship games, winning the title on their third try by defeating the Cleveland Browns, 24-17.

Native son – and future NFL commissioner – Pete Rozelle was working in the Rams' publicity department during this time, when the club fielded one of the league's most innovative and exciting offenses with a quarterback rotation featuring future Hall of Famers Bob Waterfield and Norm Van Brocklin.

The team's success extended beyond the gridiron and further cemented the NFL in the mainstream. Players began socially rubbing elbows with actors, musicians, and other celebrities while becoming staples on television shows and movies during a Tinseltown boom period. Being so close to Hollywood led to acting opportunities over the years for players such as Fred Dryer (Rams, 1972-1981), Howie Long (L.A. Raiders, 1982-1993), and fellow Hall of Famer Merlin Olsen, a member of the Rams' vaunted "Fearsome Foursome" defensive line in the 1960s.

"From the moment that Dan Reeves moved his Rams to Los Angeles, the Southern California market has been important to the growth and popularity of the league," longtime NFL executive Joe Browne says. "Names such as Van Brocklin, Waterfield, Ollie Matson, and Elroy 'Crazy Legs' Hirsch gave star power to the Rams in a town that was used to placing Hollywood stars on a pedestal."

The 1960s brought more firsts. In 1960, Los Angeles was the first home of the American Football League's Chargers, who went 10-4 under head coach Sid Gillman and reached the league's championship game. (They moved to San Diego the following season.) In 1967, the Rams were the initial NFL team to surpass one million spectators during a single season. Two years later, Dick Vermeil became the NFL's first full-time special teams coach, working under future Hall of Fame head coach George Allen. (In 1999, Vermeil was head coach of the St. Louis Rams when they won Super Bowl XXXIV.)

And, of course, there was the first Super Bowl – although it wasn't called by that name then. The inaugural AFL-NFL World Championship Game pitted the upstart Kansas City Chiefs against Vince Lombardi's Green Bay Packers. While Miami and other warm-weather sites expressed interest in hosting, Browne said Rozelle chose Los Angeles because "he liked the glamour and sizzle that was synonymous with Southern California."

In the 1970s, the Rams' James "Shack" Harris became the first Black quarterback to start and win an NFL playoff game. Georgia Frontiere became the league's first female owner of the Super Bowl era upon inheriting the team from husband Carroll Rosenbloom, who drowned in a 1979 swimming accident. In January of the following year, the Rams would become the first NFL team to play a Super Bowl in its home region (Pasadena), facing the Steelers in Super Bowl XIV in front of what remains a championship-game record 103,985 fans.

The Raiders moved from Oakland in 1982 and the following season became the first, and still only, Los Angeles-based team to win a

Fred Gehrke was a standout halfback with the Rams in the 1940s and later worked in the Broncos' front office, but his biggest contribution to the game may have been with a paintbrush. Gehrke came up with the concept of putting a logo on the Rams' helmets, and hand-painted them in his garage prior to the 1948 season. The idea soon caught on around the NFL.

Getty Images; helmet Courtesy of Pro Football Hall of Fame

Kirby Lee/AP Images

residents. Almost half the population is now Hispanic, with strong African American and Asian American representation as well.

"It's a really special place," says John Spanos, Chargers president of football operations and son of franchise owner Dean Spanos. "It's the entertainment capital of the world. There's no other city quite like it."

Having Super Bowl LVI at SoFi Stadium, as well as all the activities associated with it, will help the NFL's roots continue to grow in the marketplace. During his team's training camp last summer, Rams chief operating officer Kevin Demoff said he could already feel the buzz locally even with the game six months away.

"It has the entire community excited," said the Los Angeles native. "It's a great testament to what Stan and the NFL have done and brings full circle the league's return to L.A."

Quite the Hollywood ending as the NFL's new era in Los Angeles begins.

"[HOSTING THE SUPER BOWL] HAS THE ENTIRE COMMUNITY EXCITED ... AND BRINGS FULL CIRCLE THE LEAGUE'S RETURN TO L.A." -KEVIN DEMOFF

NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell (left) and Rams owner Stan Kroenke took part in a 2016 ceremony that broke ground on SoFi Stadium and marked a new chapter of pro football in Los Angeles.

Todd Gurley (30) scored the first home touchdown for the Rams after their return to Los Angeles, a 1-yard run against the Bills on Oct. 9, 2016, at the Coliseum. He led the NFL in rushing touchdowns in 2017 (13) and 2018 (17).

Harry How/Getty Images

Super Bowl. More popularity followed when the franchise's iconic silver-and-black colors were embraced by the hip-hop and rap music community in the early 1990s.

"Los Angeles loves winners," says Hall of Fame wide receiver James Lofton, who was raised there and played for the Raiders (1987-88) and Rams (1993). "The Raiders had won for decades and (team owner) Al Davis billed them as the winningest team in pro sports. They really were, above the (Boston) Celtics and (New York) Yankees for a long time."

On Jan. 31, 1993, Super Bowl XXVII became the seventh Super Bowl played in the area, with a crowd of 98,374 filling the Rose Bowl to watch a 52-17 Dallas Cowboys victory over the Buffalo Bills. But the love affair between the NFL and Los Angeles appeared to end after the 1994 season because of ongoing stadium issues. The Raiders returned to Oakland while the Rams relocated to St. Louis.

"For the NFL to have been vacant from L.A., it just felt like a void no matter how well other teams in other sports did in the area," Lofton says.

The league eventually found a stadium solution when Rams owner Stan Kroenke purchased the land that housed Hollywood Park race track in Inglewood. Kroenke then funded the $5.5 billion construction of SoFi Stadium, leading to the Rams' return in 2016. The Chargers followed a year later.

Both franchises came back to a different region than when the NFL left. Los Angeles County has more than tripled in population from the Rams' first season in 1946 to 10 million-plus

Alex Marvez is a SiriusXM NFL Radio host, Pro Football Hall of Fame voter, and former president of the Pro Football Writers of America.

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PREPARATION FOR A SUPER BOWL BROADCAST CAN TAKE YEARS, WITH PLENTY OF TWISTS AND TURNS ALONG THE WAY. **BY JUDY BATTISTA**

BEFORE THE CAMERA ROLLS

TWO DAYS BEFORE THE FIRST SUPER BOWL he was going to produce for NBC – Super Bowl XLIII in 2009 between the Pittsburgh Steelers and Arizona Cardinals – Fred Gaudelli was heading into a meeting with dozens of camera operators to go over storylines and shots he'd be looking for during the game.

That Friday is a big day for final preparations for the network showing the Super Bowl. There are rehearsals of the coin toss and national anthem, and local high school teams are brought in as stand-ins for the AFC and NFC champions, running plays for a few hours so the network crew can set up its camera angles.

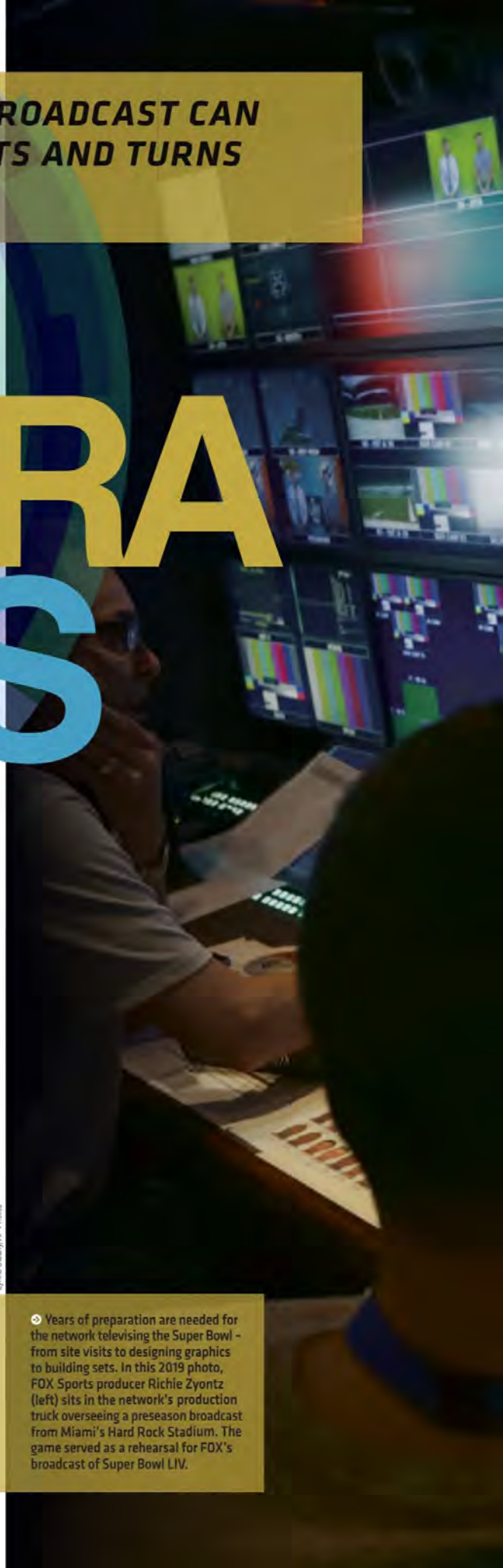
But first, Gaudelli made a detour.

"As I'm walking to that meeting, I stop at a porta john," Gaudelli says. "My Blackberry goes right down the hole. So, I walk out and find a production manager. 'Here's my credit card. I'm going to be in this meeting for two-and-a-half hours. Can you get me a Blackberry?'

"I come out, brand new Blackberry. The production manager says the guy who rents the porta johns went in and fished out the Blackberry. 'Do you want it?' Uh, no. I do not want it."

The good news: NBC will show the Super Bowl again this year, and Gaudelli, who will again be the producer, has his phone.

In the annual blur of Super Bowl preparations, Gaudelli's mishap was just another challenge, and a relatively minor one at that – easier to solve than when, at a past Super Bowl, FOX's telestrator overheated and caught fire, rendering it useless for those calling the game. Or the issues two teams with similar color schemes create for the art directors designing the graphics. And those barely compare to the amount of scrambling the COVID-19 pandemic caused in completing the groundwork for Super Bowl LVI at SoFi Stadium this year.



Lynne Sladky/AP Photos

Years of preparation are needed for the network televising the Super Bowl – from site visits to designing graphics to building sets. In this 2019 photo, FOX Sports producer Richie Zyontz (left) sits in the network's production truck overseeing a preseason broadcast from Miami's Hard Rock Stadium. The game served as a rehearsal for FOX's broadcast of Super Bowl LIV.

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Photo Courtesy FOX Sports

Paul Spinelli/AP Photos

One of the newest tools in FOX's broadcast arsenal is the Megalodon hand-held camera, which debuted in 2020 when COVID-19 restrictions led to innovative ways to get tighter and crisper shots of game action. It uses a wireless transmitter to send images directly to the production truck so they can be used during the live broadcast. CBS Sports' production trucks and satellite transmitters set up in preparation for Super Bowl XLIV in Miami. CBS' 21 Super Bowl broadcasts are the most of any network.

Broadcasting the Super Bowl is a mammoth undertaking, seemingly expanding each year with every technical innovation and new media platform. It involves hundreds of people, mountains of equipment, endless brainstorming sessions, and years – yes, years – of planning that touches every facet of the network showing the game, from engineering to public relations. While the creative touches of a broadcast delight fans, making sure fans can see the broadcast still comes down to the rudiments of television.

"The biggest thing for a Super Bowl is making sure that you have two specific things: power and transmission," explains Mike Davies, FOX Sports' senior vice president of field operations. "Without those two things, nothing happens. With those two things, you can almost make a show. If there's one thing that keeps you up at night, it's not having enough."

So there are generators, backup generators, fiber lines, satellites, and even compact cellular devices, which, Davies says, could transmit the entire Super Bowl if all else fails.

The finished product fans see and hear on gameday – the pregame show, the onfield performances, the game, the postgame, the graphics, the music, the interviews, the information – is the culmination of behind-the-scenes work that starts about two years ahead of time. By last summer, FOX Sports, which will show Super Bowl LVII a year from now, had already held its first meetings in Phoenix, Arizona. ESPN and ABC, which last March received the rights to show Super Bowl LXI in February 2027, are already thinking about what new technologies they will test and what alternate telecasts they might include. That planning will accelerate when the host city is named for the game.

From the first site survey of the host stadium, the network showing the game is in preparation mode. There are meetings to claim camera locations, art directors designing everything from the down-and-distance graphics to the backdrops in front of which the announcers stand, and producers who construct the equivalent of a movie set at the two teams' facilities to conduct the player shoots that make their way into feature stories and the teases that run before commercials.

The final few weeks are a frenzy of activity, when the network essentially creates its Super Bowl workspace from a village of trailers filled with office equipment, so that the lifeblood of the network can continue to flow while hundreds of people are on the ground. Sets and camera platforms are built, wires are laid, and the network's biggest production truck is driven to the Super Bowl host city. It's all meant to turn out the polished spectacle that is, every year, the most-watched television show in the United States.

"Once we know the two teams, then it's 'go time,'" says Komal Bhukhanwala, CBS's art director, production graphics, who oversees the group that comes up with the concepts and designs for every graphic viewers see on the air, and who gives input on set designs and the overall look of the Super Bowl. "Those two weeks are absolute insanity."

One of Bhukhanwala's former colleagues, the late Gareth Hughes, experienced that firsthand ahead of Super Bowl 50. The jeweler Tiffany and Co. made a golden "5-0" to accompany the silver Lombardi Trophy, and CBS, which was broadcasting the game, had possession of both the trophy and the numbers to use for feature shoots with the Broncos and Panthers. The shoots require a crew of 30 to 40 people, who construct sets at the team facilities one day, spend the entire next day shooting the footage, then fly the day after that and do it all again at the other team's facility.

The trophies usually travel by courier, but CBS had a particularly tight turnaround – shooting in Carolina on Tuesday before flying to Denver and needing the sets ready when Peyton Manning would be interviewed at 6 a.m. Thursday. With the shoot ending late on Tuesday night, Hughes, the CBS producer overseeing it, decided it was wiser to take the items on the flight to Denver rather than risk them not making it in time for Manning's interview.

On Wednesday morning, he checked in at the airport. The Lombardi Trophy and the hard case in which it travels weighed 85 pounds – it incurred an overage charge, but that was no problem. The 5-0, though, weighed 115 pounds. That was too heavy, the person at the desk told

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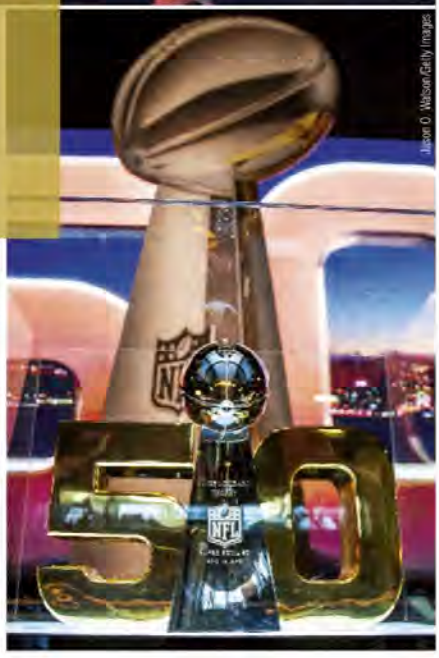
Mike Ehrmann/Getty Images

For the executive producer of the network showing the Super Bowl, gameday can be relatively relaxing – perhaps even allowing one to enjoy performances such as The Weeknd at the *Pepsi Super Bowl LV Halftime Show*.



Jason O. Watson/Getty Images

The Vince Lombardi Trophy and special gold "5-0" made by Tiffany and Co. for Super Bowl 50 led to some amusing travels for the late Gareth Hughes, a CBS Sports producer in charge of that year's pregame features.

Hughes. So Hughes opened his duffel bag and put some of his clothes into the case designed for the numerals. With the golden "5" cushioned by his clothes and underwear, he stuffed the "0" into his bag and lugged it to the security line.

Last June, just weeks before his passing, he told the story of what happened next.

"I put it on the conveyor belt and said to the [TSA agent], 'You're going to want to talk to me.' It started to go through, and the woman yells out, 'What is that?' I yelled back, 'It's a big gold 0.' The woman who was handling my carry-on said, 'He's right; it's a big gold 0.'"

The "0" went in the overhead luggage bin and made it, unharmed, to Denver.

For its most recent Super Bowl broadcast – Super Bowl LII in Minneapolis – NBC deployed more than 500 employees, 106 cameras, 50 miles of cable, and 14 mobile units, the massive trucks parked just outside the stadium that serve as the nerve center of the show. Fifteen hundred crew meals were served on gameday alone.

That's in a normal year.

Last year was not a normal year.

"The first replay we rolled from the Super Bowl was from the hotel room of one of our tape operators, who had to be quarantined and couldn't come out," says Jim Rikhoff, CBS' lead game producer.

COVID-19 forced both CBS, which had last year's game, and NBC, which has this one, to change their preparation plans. For NBC, it meant they could not make what would likely have been three trips to SoFi Stadium in 2020, forcing some of the on-site planning to be pushed into the 2021 regular season. For CBS, it meant Rikhoff and everyone else got used to Zoom meetings very quickly. Rikhoff estimates that in the two months leading up to the game, he worked on the Super Bowl from 8:30 a.m. to 10 p.m. every day, "eating, breathing, and sleeping the Super Bowl." And the pandemic meant that an astonishing amount of preparation, and even the work done on Super Bowl Sunday, was being conducted from employees' homes.

In the summer of 2020, an assortment of equipment was delivered to the Manhattan apartment of Melissa Melendez, an associate director for CBS Sports. There were monitors, an iPad, a headset, and a communications panel – essentially creating a control room in her living room. Melendez worked every Sunday of the regular season from there. On Super Bowl Sunday, she was the backup associate director for CBS' pregame show, the safety net for rolling commercials and pre-taped segments. She also timed the show in case something went wrong at the control room at headquarters and the remote operation had to take over the production.

"I did the Super Bowl from the Upper West Side," Melendez says. "Other than people yelling at their kids and me hearing that, it went so smooth. We could hear people from Tampa crystal clear."

That, of course, is the goal. For someone in Davies' role, the deadline is to have everything ready in time for the first rehearsal of the halftime show a few days before Super Bowl Sunday. If all goes well, Davies gets to the stadium early on gameday, but has little to do. Gaudelli looks forward to halftime, because it gives him a few minutes to clear his head. (When Bruce Springsteen performed at Super Bowl XLIII, Gaudelli actually stepped out to watch.)

He has also had less pleasant halftimes. During Super Bowl XXXVII between the Buccaneers and the Raiders, players wore microphones to provide sound for use during the game for the first time. Oakland was getting blown out at the half when someone walked into the truck to talk to Gaudelli.

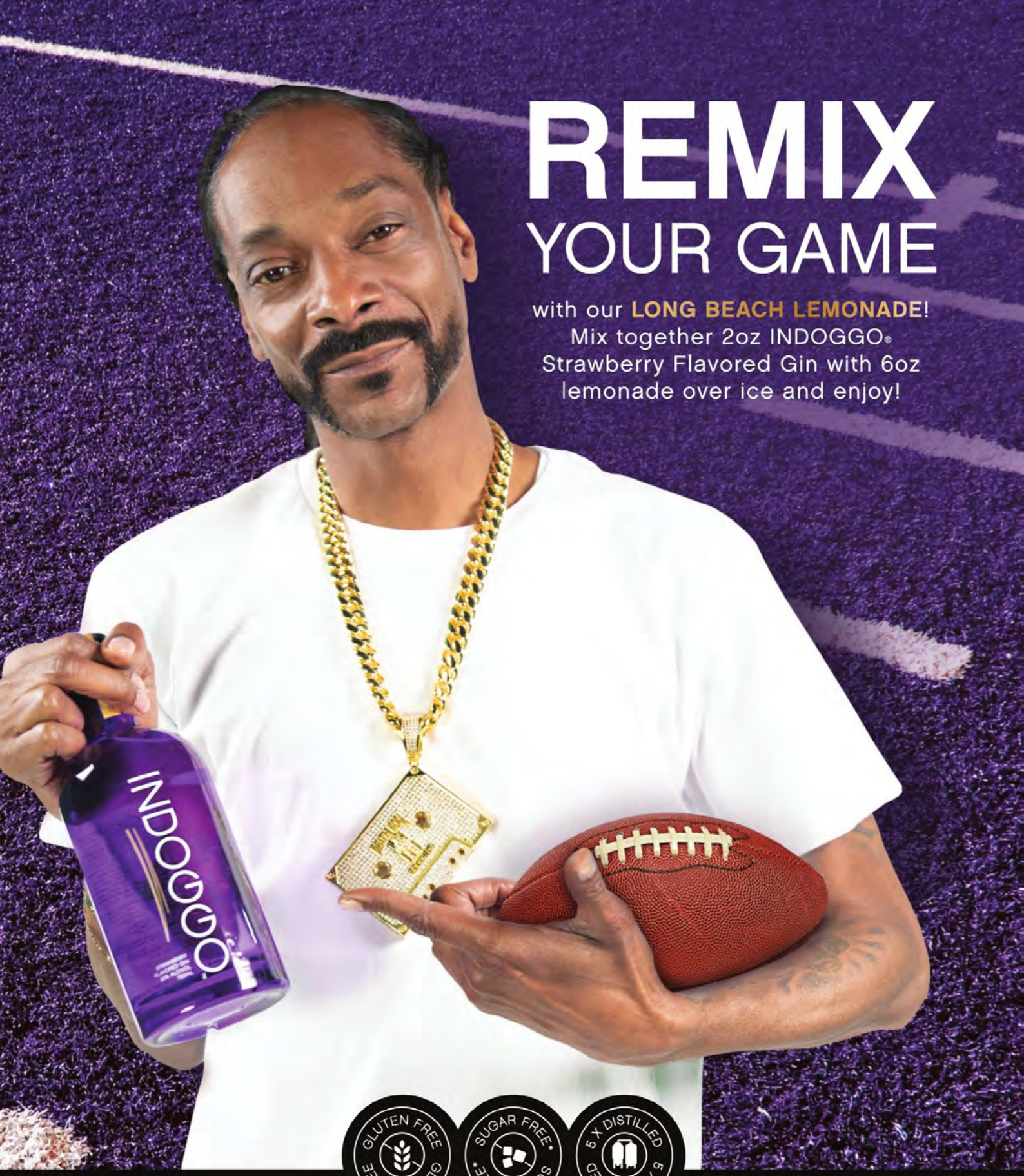
"Fred, I have some bad news," Gaudelli was told. "Jerry Rice just flushed his mic down the toilet."

That memory might stick with Gaudelli forever, but once the last of the confetti falls, the Super Bowl disappears quickly. Within days, the network has removed its equipment and headed out, disassembling as quickly as it assembled. Gaudelli, like so many fans, is left to rerun the game in his head.

"I'm replaying all the things I wish I did," Gaudelli says. "So much is tied into what kind of game it is. You plan for a long time, and you know it's the biggest stage in our country. Sometimes I don't watch the game for a month, even if I thought it was good. I need time to go by."

And at another network, the planning accelerates for the next one.

***Judy Battista** is an award-winning sportswriter who has covered the NFL since 2000. She is a columnist and on-air analyst for nfl.com and NFL Network.*



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BELIEVE IT OR NOT

SUPER BOWL RECORDS SPAN FROM THE UNUSUAL TO THE UNEXPECTED TO THE AMAZING, SOMETIMES ALL WRAPPED UP IN ONE.

BY D. ORLANDO LEDBETTER

The Super Bowl history book sparkles with records from Hall of Famers, dynasties, and some of the most prolific offenses and defenses the game has ever seen.

But for pure shock, drama, and impact, none compare to the mark held by a massive linebacker who for one play in Super Bowl XLIII turned into a runaway locomotive as he bolted 100 yards through the Tampa Bay night for the longest interception-return touchdown the Super Bowl has ever seen.

It happened near the end of the second quarter with the underdog Arizona Cardinals deep in Pittsburgh territory, trailing by three points and looking for a momentum-building touchdown before halftime. Quarterback Kurt Warner, closing out his Hall of Fame career, dropped back to pass. He saw the Steelers blitzing and threw to his hot read, wide receiver Anquan Boldin. Warner expected James Harrison to be among those coming at him, but the Steelers defender smartly dropped back into the passing lane.

Harrison read the QB's eyes, stepped in front of Boldin, and caught the pass cleanly at the goal line.

The 6-foot, 242-pounder took off to his right and found an opening when cornerback Deshea Townsend put a block on Warner at the 30. He then powered through a diving tackle attempt by tight end Leonard Pope at the 35, regained his balance, and kept on trucking.

Harrison crossed into Arizona territory, where he next had to deal with Cardinals running back Edgerrin James. Aided by a block from linebacker LaMarr Woodley, the big man cut inside and jumped over the would-be tackler. By now, it was apparent Harrison would not be denied. He broke away from a tackle attempt by Arizona's Mike Gandy and was hit by wide receivers Steve Breaston and Larry Fitzgerald as he fell into the end zone with no time left on the clock.

A booth review confirmed that Harrison had broken the plane of the goal line before his knee touched the ground. In an instant, instead of being down 14-10, the Steelers had a 10-point halftime lead – a pivotal moment on their way to a 27-23 triumph.

"To be honest, I really didn't think I'd make it all the way back," Harrison told the *New York Times*. "My teammates threw some vicious blocks."

Harrison was sprawled on the field and later needed oxygen.

"I've never been more emotionally drained in my life," he said.

Warner regretted the errant pass.

"I wasn't able to see him around my linemen," he said. "He made a great play, not just the interception, but to get it in for the touchdown."

Over the course of those 18 seconds, Harrison not only set a record but arguably made the biggest play in the history of a franchise that's home to six Lombardi Trophies. That puts him in elite company.

Here are some others who've distinguished themselves with record-breaking Super Sunday efforts:

Heinz Kluetmeier/Getty Images

A stunning turnaround took place in Super Bowl XLIII when James Harrison (92) raced into the record book with a 100-yard interception return for a Steelers touchdown.

CARDINALS
11
92
2
69

Al Messerschmidt/AP Images | Getty Images | Bill Sikes/AP Images

Some of the Super Bowl's most enduring records are held by (left to right) John Riggins, Rod Martin, and Phil Simms. Riggins had 38 rushing attempts in Washington's Super Bowl XVII victory; Martin intercepted three passes to help the Raiders prevail in Super Bowl XV; and Simms set marks for completion percentage and passer rating in the Giants' Super Bowl XXI win.

Riggins runs and runs and ...

Washington running back John Riggins may be best remembered for one momentous carry in Super Bowl XVII, but the truth is he had 37 others that day on his way to MVP honors in his team's 27-17 victory. Those 38 rushing attempts remain a Super Bowl record, and given the way football has evolved into an aerial show in recent decades, that number seems safe. No player has carried the ball more than 30 times in a Super Bowl since then.

Running behind a powerful offensive line affectionately called "the Hogs," Riggins battered the Miami Dolphins all day long. On rushing attempt No. 30 – a fourth-and-1 play early in the fourth quarter – he popped a 43-yard touchdown run around the left side that put his team in front. It was also the longest TD run in Super Bowl history at the time.

Riggins would carry the ball eight more times on Washington's next possession, which produced another touchdown, and finished the game with 166 rushing yards as well as 15 receiving yards to single-handedly outgain Miami (176 total yards).

It was a fitting final performance to an exhilarating and exhausting four-game postseason run that saw Riggins total 136 carries for 610 yards – after he told head coach Joe Gibbs he wanted the ball more.

"I've never been the guy to step forward and volunteer for anything. But there was a lot on the line. … It was my 12th year in the league, and I knew this was the moment," Riggins told CSNWashington.com several years ago. "If you don't stand up, the rest of your life you're going to be sitting there going, 'I wish I would have said something.'

"So at least I had what it took in that moment to raise my hand and say, 'I'll go.'"

Martin brings down the Birds

Linebacker Rod Martin wasn't known as a ball hawk during his 12 years in the NFL, spent entirely with the Oakland/L.A. Raiders. But try telling that to the Philadelphia Eagles.

Martin picked off Eagles quarterback Ron Jaworski three times in Super Bowl XV, a record that still stands 41 years later. In fact, his three picks tie him for the *career* record for interceptions in a Super Bowl. Not bad for a day's work.

Martin started early and finished late, intercepting Jaworski on the Eagles' third play from scrimmage. He had stepped up to attack the run, but didn't fully bite on the play-action fake and instead slipped back into zone coverage.

"I just reacted to [the pass] and caught it," Martin told the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* in 2017. "I thought that was a turning point in the whole game because the momentum shifted to our whole team."

Seven plays later, the Raiders scored their first touchdown as they cruised to a 27-10 victory. Martin's second interception came shortly after halftime to set up an Oakland field goal, and he iced the game with another pick with three minutes remaining in the fourth quarter.

For Martin, who earned All-Pro honors several times in his career, it was an unusual way to make an impact. He appeared in 165 career regular-season games and grabbed just 14 interceptions – with no more than four in a season – and didn't intercept a pass in his 11 other playoff contests.

But on that day, he picked the Eagles apart.

Brady and the QB bunch

Any review of the Super Bowl record book will turn up repeated Tom Brady sightings. Games. Victories. MVP awards. Pass attempts, pass completions, passing yards, and passing touchdowns – for a game and a career. It's more of a challenge to find the records Brady *doesn't* hold.

But there are a few.

For one, he hasn't been perfect. While Brady owns a mighty impressive 7-3 Super Bowl mark, six quarterbacks have won multiple Super Bowl titles without losing in the big game. Pittsburgh Steelers QB Terry Bradshaw and San Francisco 49ers signal-caller Joe Montana both went 4-0, Troy Aikman was 3-0, and Bart Starr, Jim Plunkett, and Eli Manning all posted 2-0 Super Bowl records.

Then there are the standards for completion percentage (88.0) and passer rating (150.9) for a game. New York Giants quarterback Phil Simms owns both of those, accomplished in a masterful performance in a 39-20 win over the Denver Broncos in Super Bowl XXI. He

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Left: Among the most surprising Super Bowl record holders is Washington's Timmy Smith (36), who never started a game before amassing 204 rushing yards in Super Bowl XXII vs. Denver.
Right: L.C. Greenwood (68) had four sacks in Super Bowl X, but that total isn't recognized as the record, since sacks didn't become an official individual NFL statistic until 1982.

connected on 22 of 25 pass attempts, with three TDs and no interceptions, in leading the Giants to their first Super Bowl title.

And while Brady has enjoyed the most prolific passing game and career of any Super Bowl QB, the most prolific quarter belongs to Washington's Doug Williams. He threw for 228 yards in the second quarter of Super Bowl XXII against Denver, highlighted by scoring passes of 80, 27, 50 and 8 yards, as part of a five-touchdown explosion that propelled his team to a 35-10 halftime lead. Imagine what he might have done if not for an emergency root canal the night before the game and a knee injury that nearly sidelined him late in the first quarter.

Brady had a close-up view of an obscure Super Bowl record set by the Eagles' Nick Foles in Super Bowl LII. In that game, a 41-33 Philadelphia victory, Foles became the only player to both throw and catch a touchdown pass in the same Super Bowl. He actually threw three TDs, the last of those the game-winner to Zach Ertz, while his scoring grab came near the end of the second quarter on a pass from tight end Trey Burton, a play famously dubbed the "Philly Special."

Fame ... fleeting and forever

Timmy Smith was a rookie who had never started a game when he was pegged to handle the bulk of the carries in Washington's Super Bowl XXII contest against the Broncos. He made the most of the opportunity, setting a Super Bowl record with 204 rushing yards and scoring twice in his team's 42-10 victory.

How unexpected was the effort? Smith, a backup to George Rogers, had rushed for just 126 yards in the regular season, though he did show promise in the team's first two playoff wins, gaining 66 yards against the Chicago Bears and 72 against the Minnesota Vikings.

While Doug Williams was passing his way into history, Smith did the damage on the ground. Among his 22 carries was a 58-yard TD run during the team's 35-point second quarter and a 4-yard TD burst that capped the game's scoring. He also had gains of 43 and 32 yards.

ANY REVIEW OF THE SUPER BOWL RECORD BOOK WILL TURN UP MULTIPLE TOM BRADY SIGHTINGS. IT'S MORE OF A CHALLENGE TO FIND THE RECORDS HE *DOESN'T* HOLD.

Unfortunately, that big day didn't translate into a big career. Smith spent just one more season with Washington, rushing for 470 yards in 1988, and then had a brief stint with the Dallas Cowboys in 1990 before leaving pro football.

While Smith was flaming out, Jerry Rice was just starting to get hot.

Rice played in four Super Bowls (XXIII, XXIV, and XXIX with the San Francisco 49ers; XXXVII with the Oakland Raiders) and caught a touchdown pass in each one. He owns the record for career Super Bowl touchdown receptions with eight and also holds the mark for TD catches in a game (3) – doing that twice. It looks like Rice's name will be there for a while, too; he also holds Super Bowl standards for career receptions, receiving yards in a game and a career, yards from scrimmage in a game, and career points.

Sack attack*

Finally, when is a record not a record?

When you're L.C. Greenwood. The Steelers' longtime defensive end sacked Roger Staubach four times in Pittsburgh's Super Bowl X win over the Cowboys. The problem is that sacks didn't become an official individual NFL stat until 1982, seven years after Greenwood's feat and a year after he retired.

So while Greenwood, a four-time Super Bowl champion, owns the unofficial mark, the Super Bowl record book lists the Falcons' Grady Jarrett (Super Bowl LI), the Panthers' Kony Ealy (50), the Cardinals' Darnell Dockett (XLIII), and the Packers' Reggie White (XXXI) as the official co-holders with three sacks each.

D. Orlando Ledbetter, *the long-time Atlanta Falcons beat writer for the* Atlanta Journal Constitution, *has also covered the Cincinnati Bengals and Green Bay Packers. He served as the President of the Professional Football Writers of America from 2013-15.*

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2022 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

THE YEAR AHEAD

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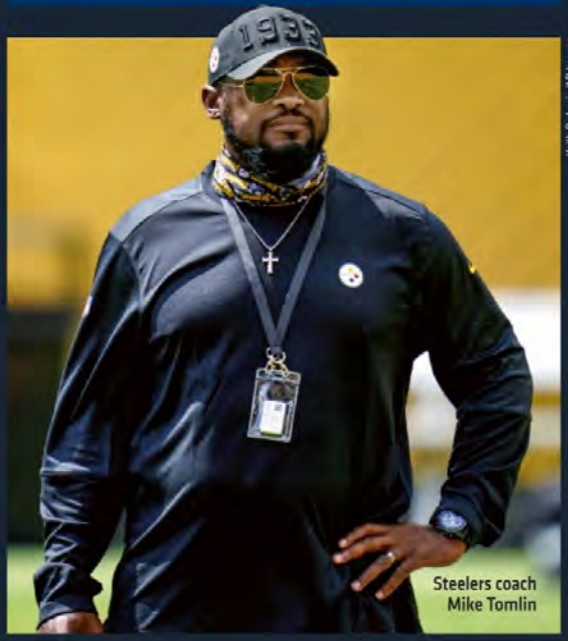
NFL SCOUTING COMBINE

nfl.com/combine

In preparation for the upcoming draft, more than 300 top pro prospects will attend the NFL Scouting Combine at Indianapolis' Lucas Oil Stadium. NFL Network will be there for it all, providing exclusive and extensive live coverage each day with player workouts, expert analysis, and interviews with participants, coaches, and team officials.



Keith Srakocic/AP Images

Steelers coach Mike Tomlin

MID-JULY
TRAINING CAMP/PRESEASON

nfl.com/trainingcamp

Training camp is where NFL teams officially start their pursuit of a Super Bowl title. As camps unfold and teams narrow down to their 53-man rosters, NFL.com and NFL Network will provide analysis and insights from around the league. NFL Network also will televise every preseason game, including more than a dozen games live.

Jeff Haynes/AP Images

APRIL 28-30
NFL DRAFT

nfl.com/draft

Find out where the next generation of NFL stars will be playing when the 87th annual NFL Draft takes place in Las Vegas – on and around the iconic Las Vegas Strip. NFL Network and ESPN will provide live coverage, starting with Round 1 in primetime (8 p.m. ET) on Thursday, April 28. In 2021, the top three picks were quarterbacks: The Jaguars selected Clemson's Trevor Lawrence with the No. 1 overall pick; the Jets took BYU's Zach Wilson at No. 2; and the 49ers chose North Dakota State's Trey Lance at No 3.

2022 NFL DRAFT ORDER

1. Jacksonville Jaguars
2. Detroit Lions
3. Houston Texans
4. New York Jets
5. New York Giants
6. Carolina Panthers
7. New York Giants+
8. Atlanta Falcons
9. Denver Broncos
10. New York Jets+
11. Washington Football Team
12. Minnesota Vikings
13. Cleveland Browns
14. Baltimore Ravens
15. Philadelphia Eagles+
16. Philadelphia Eagles+
17. Los Angeles Chargers
18. New Orleans Saints
19. Philadelphia Eagles
20. Pittsburgh Steelers
21. New England Patriots
22. Las Vegas Raiders
23. Arizona Cardinals
24. Dallas Cowboys
25. Buffalo Bills
26. Tennessee Titans
27. Tampa Bay Buccaneers
28. Green Bay Packers
29. Cincinnati Bengals*
30. Miami Dolphins+*
31. Detroit Lions+*
32. Kansas City Chiefs*

*+pick obtained via trade *Final order determined by playoff finish*

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Jay Drowns/Getty Images

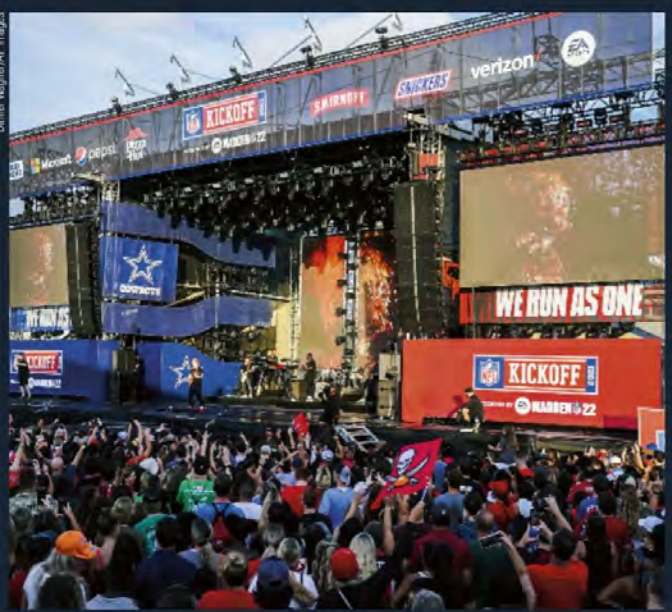
AUGUST 4-7
PFHOF ENSHRINEMENT WEEK
profootballhof.com/tickets

Honor the Heroes of the Game at the 2022 Pro Football Hall of Fame Enshrinement Week Powered by Johnson Controls in Canton, Ohio. Call 844-4HOFTIX for information on tickets and VIP packages for what's certain to be an unforgettable Enshrinement celebration that will see more than 120 members of the Hall of Fame on hand to welcome the newest class of gridirion legends.

Steve Luciano/AP Images

DATES TBA
INTERNATIONAL SERIES
nfl.com

The NFL International Series will continue during the 2022 regular season. The league has now hosted at least one regular-season game outside the United States in 14 of the past 15 years; in 2021, there were two games played before sellout crowds in London's Tottenham Hotspur Stadium. Next year's teams, dates, and locations will be announced by the NFL in the coming weeks.



Daniel Wagner/AP Images

SEPTEMBER 8
NFL KICKOFF
nfl.com/kickoff

The 2022 NFL season gets underway Thursday, Sept. 8, with a day-long celebration at the home of the Super Bowl LVI champion. It's all part of *NFL Kickoff*, which this season was highlighted by appearances from Buccaneers Legends, photo ops with the Vince Lombardi Trophy, and a live performance by Ed Sheeran at Julian B. Lane Riverfront Park prior to the Buccaneers-Cowboys contest at Raymond James Stadium.

Rick Scuteri/AP Images

FEBRUARY 12, 2023
SUPER BOWL LVII
nfl.com/superbowl

The Super Bowl heads to Arizona for the fourth time as Super Bowl LVII will be played at State Farm Stadium, home of the Cardinals. FOX will televise the game. Fans can learn more about the game and the events leading up to it on the NFL's social media platforms, the league's official Super Bowl website, and by visiting the Arizona Super Bowl Host Committee website (azsuperbowl.com).

BY TOM FLORES

SILVER AND GOLDEN STATE

CALIFORNIA AND THE SUPER BOWL STAND AT THE CENTER OF MY FAVORITE FOOTBALL MOMENTS.

ASK ANYONE WHO HAS COACHED OR PLAYED IN THE SUPER BOWL, and they'll tell you the same thing: Football can take you to amazing and unexpected places. So many of my football memories happened right here in California. From playing at Sanger High School to spending my college days at Fresno City College and what's now the University of the Pacific, then being the first starting quarterback in the history of the Raiders and, finally, coaching the Raiders to Super Bowl championships in both Oakland and Los Angeles. And while things didn't always come easily, I've always considered myself blessed.

I injured my shoulder in my senior year at Pacific and wasn't picked in the 1958 NFL Draft, then had failed tryouts with Calgary of the Canadian Football League and Washington in the NFL. But my shoulder finally healed, the Raiders gave me an opportunity, and my life and future changed forever. (Actually, the biggest and best change in my life came in 1961 when I married Barbara, now my wife of 60 years.)

Everyone knew each other in the American Football League, so when I left Oakland and went to play for Buffalo and then Kansas City, it was like going to your cousin's house. It was with the Chiefs when I had my first taste of the Super Bowl, backing up Len Dawson on the team that shocked the Vikings in Super Bowl IV. For a guy who was part of the AFL for its entire 10-year existence, it was really satisfying to win that last game before the merger.

AP Images

Head coach Tom Flores is carried off the field by members of the Los Angeles Raiders after the team's 38-9 victory over Washington in Super Bowl XVIII.

Before long, I was back with the Raiders as an assistant coach under John Madden. When John retired after the 1978 season, Raiders owner Al Davis made a bold move – and one that changed my life again – by hiring me as the team's head coach. Al and I had known each other for several years, and I can remember him struggling when speaking with me about the job. "If you can't produce, I might, umm …" before I finished the sentence for him: "You might have to fire me."

It was early in my second year, 1980, when some thought that might happen. We were struggling with a 2-3 record and our starting quarterback, Dan Pastorini, was out for the season with a broken leg. Al had me to his office and said, "I didn't hire you to fire you; I hired you to win." And I told him that we weren't doing anything wrong. We just needed to do it better.

That's the message I brought back to our team. And while it may have looked bleak from the outside, we had faith we could turn it around. Jim Plunkett took over at quarterback and proved he could still really throw the ball. More importantly, you could see the confidence he brought to the huddle.

But even after we made the playoffs as a wild card and reached Super Bowl XV against the Eagles, a lot of people didn't think that a team like ours should be there. We had a bunch of guys near the end of their careers – Gene Upshaw, Art Shell, Burgess Owens, Cedrick Hardman – but we knew how to win, and we had a way of making big plays in big games.

The biggest play in that Super Bowl came on our second touchdown. Jim wasn't known for his scrambling and running back Kenny King wasn't known for his pass-catching. But on that play, Jim kept things alive by scrambling to his left – and that's a real difficult thing for a right-handed QB to do and still throw the ball accurately across his body. Kenny caught the pass along the sideline and broke free for an 80-yard touchdown that gave us a 14-0 lead. From there, we never looked back.

Several of the same players were with us when we won Super Bowl XVIII. It's funny, but when you're in the moment, you don't think of yourself as a trailblazer. Yet as the years have gone on, I realize the impact my career had on the Latino community. And it really hit me one day when I was signing an autograph for a fan. He told me, "When you won your first Super Bowl as a coach, my dad cried." I didn't understand at first, but then he said, "He was so proud."

That told me everything. For above all else, if I've inspired others to pursue their dreams, I've done well.

__Tom Flores__ went 4-0 in the Super Bowl as a player, assistant coach, and head coach. He was a member of the Pro Football Hall of Fame's Class of 2021.

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* Source: Joseph Poore and Thomas Nemeck (2018), Raychel E. Santon et al. (2020)

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